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I

POEMS, SONGS,

AND OTHER WRITINGS

BY

ROBERT BUCHANAN,

FALKIRK.

ROBERT BUCHANAN:

Born June 22nd, 1835;
Died December 31st, 1875.

POEMS, SONGS,

AND

OTHER WRITINGS

BY

ROBERT BUCHANAN,

FALKIRK.

EDITED BY

JAMES LOVE.

"In Doric accents sweet and strong,
He sang for us 'The Dear Auld Hame.'"

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY F. JOHNSTON & CO.,
"HERALD" OFFICE, FALKIRK.

1901.

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FORE-WORD.

THE idea of publishing the writings of ROBERT BUCHANAN was suggested by Judge Christie while unveiling the poet's monument in September, 1899. At Mr. Johnston's request I readily agreed to collect the poems from the files of the *Falkirk Herald*, to which, with few exceptions, they were contributed, and also supply such information regarding them as might help the reader to understand any local references they contain. As the poet used various *noms de plume* I cannot be sure that everything he sent to our local press is included in this volume, but if there are any omitted they are few indeed. Many of Buchanan's pieces were never published, but when written out were given to friends and finally lost. A number, however, have been rescued, and are distinguished from the others by an asterisk. The volume closes with a series of articles written for the *Falkirk Herald*, and entitled "The Cock o' the Steeple to the 'Bairns' o' Fa'kirk."* They will prove to our readers that Buchanan had the pen of a ready writer, and that he could

* The original "Cock o' the Steeple" was Alexander Birnie, a writer who contributed to a newspaper called the *Falkirk Liberal*. The *nom de plume* was afterwards adopted by Robert Buchanan in the articles referred to.

express himself in his native Doric with a fluency which many a one might envy.

Regarding the music of "The Dear Auld Hame," which is incorporated in the volume, one or two slight corrections have been made on the melody, thus restoring it to its original form. It has been set, however, on B flat, as being a more suitable key for the majority of voices than the original key, C.

On Mr. Johnston's behalf I have to acknowledge the kindness of many correspondents, who, in response to an advertisement in the columns of the *Falkirk Herald*, placed in my hands copies of Buchanan's poems. Thanks are likewise due to others who have assisted in the work of perpetuating the memory of one whose love for his native town found such fitting and remarkable expression in rhyme and prose.

JAMES LOVE.

WOODLAND HILL,
FALKIRK.

MEMOIR OF THE POET.

ROBERT BUCHANAN was born in the Steeple Land, Falkirk, June 22, 1835, and baptised July 14th following. His father, Robert Buchanan, was a native of Paisley, and had settled in Falkirk about the close of 1830, working at his trade of baker, in the employment of Mrs. Christie, who carried on that business in the Steeple Land known as the "Pie Office." On the death of Mrs. Christie, Mr. Buchanan secured the business, marrying on June 26th, 1832, Miss Margaret Easton, a Falkirk "bairn," then resident in the High Church Parish, Paisley.

Never of robust health, Mr. Buchanan died in May, 1835, a month before the subject of our notice was born. The early education of Robert Buchanan was received at the Falkirk Parish School from Mr. Thomas Downie and his successor Mr. James Burns, while he studied for a time under Mr. John Adams, schoolmaster.

Like many others who have subsequently become distinguished for mental acquirements, Robert Buchanan's school-days were not noteworthy either for regular attendance or an overwhelming love for his studies; indeed, he seems to have been fonder of play than of books, and "Whannie," as his schoolmates loved to call him, excelled his fellows in all kinds of outdoor games. A hurried glance at his lessons, and, as a rule, he could keep his place with the best of his classmates. Though his early education was of the

most elementary kind (and for this he could blame no one but himself), in after years he atoned for the loss by a diligent course of reading, in which his natural quickness of acquirement stood him in good stead.

On leaving school he was apprenticed as a currier in the employment of his uncle, Mr. John Gillespie, who carried on his business in that building situated at the foot of Bell's Wynd, and now the property of Mr. Robert Barr. For a time, we understand, he was also in the employment of the late Bailie Dick: but, inheriting his father's delicate constitution, Robert Buchanan had not the bodily strength necessary for such a laborious employment. Besides, he had higher ambitions than following the craft of Simon of old. Nor were his intimate friends oblivious to the fact that his abilities warranted them in endeavouring to procure a situation for him more in keeping with his mental endowments. Accordingly, at the age of twenty-two years, and by the influence of the late Mr. John Russel of Mayfield (afterwards Provost of Falkirk) Robert Buchanan received a nomination to Her Majesty's Customs, and shortly afterwards (in 1858) he was appointed out-door officer in the port of Grangemouth. On July 1st of the succeeding year (1859) he married Miss Margaret Rankine, a native of the "dear auld toon," and daughter of Mr. William Rankine, coal grieve, and officer of Falkirk Parish Church.

While in Grangemouth Buchanan won the esteem and affection of his fellow officers, and the confidence and respect of his superiors; with the general public he was universally respected, being always found ready to take a share in promoting any work which had for its object the well-being of the community at large. In the local volunteer corps he took a deep interest and was a gunner, while Freemasonry had many attractions for him, he being a member of Lodge Zetland 391. He took a great delight in music, and excelled as a vocalist and flute player. After serving in Grangemouth for nearly ten years, he passed the necessary examination and was promoted to Dublin as

examining officer, and some five or six years later he was removed—still on promotion—to Londonderry, where the last three years of his life were spent.

While, in the matter of professional advancement and increased emoluments, his removal to Ireland was no doubt a goodly step in his career, it is to be feared it was attended with some drawbacks. Neither he nor Mrs. Buchanan—especially the latter—took kindly to their residence in the Emerald Isle. The thoughts and memories of "The dear auld toon wi' grey spire crooned," and the recollections of Grangemouth were ever haunting them; when we add to this the fact that in the "silent cemetery" of their native town there reposed the dust of several of their offspring, we cannot wonder that the "exile," as he so styled himself, longed to be settled once more among his former friends. Nor was the climate congenial to Mrs. Buchanan's health, which broke down, and her illness assuming the form of a rapid consumption, ended fatally in July, 1874. In accordance with her wish, as well as his own inclination and we may almost say forebodings, her husband conveyed her remains to Falkirk, where they were interred in the cemetery at Camelon, in the same grave as that in which Buchanan now reposes. Of his many domestic afflictions this was the most bitter, for he had committed to the dust the remains of her of whom he wrote in life's heyday:—

"Not unto me the grateful earth,
Can yield with all her store,
Of riches and bright gems of worth,
Than she whose image ever twines
Around life's thorny way:
Whose pure and gentle spirit shines,
Through love from day to day."

It is said by those who knew Buchanan intimately that the loss of his partner in life was to him a severe blow, from which he never rightly recovered—his once buoyant spirits lost their former gaiety and the affairs of the world had no charm for him, his mind being much occupied with

thoughts of "higher things." Shortly after his removal to Londonderry he caught a severe cold, which, being neglected, settled down with such ulterior consequences on a frame which was never robust, and which had for a considerable time previous become gradually weaker, that he was rendered more or less an invalid till his death, which took place at Londonderry on December 31st, 1875.

"Dead as the year was dying,
In gusty wind and lashing rain!
He has laid down the weariness of life—
The fret, and the care, and the pain.
For many a day, wherein for him
Lay any charm to make life lov'd?
The coldness of the shadow grim
Chilled him, and would not be removed:
In truth, with Death's companionship
He walked his way these latter years,
Until he saw Life's hope-stars dip
In darkness, all their radiant spheres,
And only Faith afar could see
The star that hangs o'er Calvary!
Dead as the year was dying." *

For a month previous to his death, his state of health was such that he was confined to the house; his intention ultimately, was to procure a month's sick leave and settle in Falkirk with his family, hoping that a return to his native air, and intercourse with old friends, might improve his condition bodily and mentally, but it was willed otherwise, for, on the very day he intended leaving Londonderry, his remains were interred in Falkirk Cemetery beside those of his wife. His end appears to have been peaceful and painless; he retired to bed on the evening of the 30th December, and his lifeless body was found next morning. The following poem found among his papers after his death shows the trend of his mind during the closing days of his life, and that the event was not unexpected:—

* These lines were written by the poet's friend, Mr. J. B. Cameron, Grangemouth.

"A few short months and where
  Shall this frail body be?
In the cold, cold grave among the dead
  Of the silent cemetery.
A few tears shed, a few flowers spread,
  A lingering glance farewell;
Come, shut the gates and let him rest
  Within his narrow cell.

"A few short months and where
  Shall this caged spirit be?
Among the lost, or with the saints,
  To all eternity.
Bought with the price of precious blood
  From doubt, and griefs, and fears,
Shall I with angels sing His praise
  Through never-ending years?

"Yes! blessed be His holy name,
  Though vile and full of sin,
I boldly knocked, and lo the door
  Was oped and let me in.
Rejoice, my soul, rejoice!
  Enrolled as one of His,
I go to meet my Sovereign Lord,
  And see Him as He is."

Long before Robert Buchanan had left school he was known to his classmates as a ready rhymer. He could hit off in metre the dominie's peculiarities, and the "poem" was eagerly scanned and handed from desk to desk, care being taken lest the appreciation (?) should fall into the hands of the "maister."

So far as we can gather he began to contribute to the columns of the *Falkirk Herald* in 1856. In that year we find one or two pieces from his pen, which, although anonymous, are known to be his composition. From this date—with the exception of the years 1861, 1862, and 1863—Robert Buchanan was a regular contributor to the poet's corner of the *Falkirk Herald*, and on his removal to Grangemouth he became local correspondent of that paper. An

examination of the files goes to prove that he filled his office with no small degree of credit to himself, and, we have reason to believe, to the utmost satisfaction of the proprietor. With few exceptions, all the poetical effusions in this volume were first printed in the *Falkirk Herald*. They are distinguished for that light, fanciful grace and airy turn of thought and rhythm so often absent in many so-called songs and verses.

During the latter portion of his life Robert Buchanan's pen was little exercised in original composition, and what he did write assumed chiefly a devotional character. These were not published in his lifetime, and are given among the closing poetical pieces in the volume.

Proposal to Erect a Monument to the Poet.

At a re-union of Falkirk "Bairns" held in Glasgow a few years ago, Judge Christie, who presided, suggested the propriety of erecting a monument to the writer of "The Dear Auld Hame." Nothing came of the suggestion, however, until 1899, when the matter was again revived in the columns of the *Falkirk Herald*. It was thought that such a proposal would readily command the support of the public. There were many who had had the privilege of personal acquaintance with Buchanan, and who admired him not only for his poetic gifts but for his excellent qualities of head and heart; these friends, it was conjectured, would deem it a pleasure to aid in perpetuating the memory of their friend. Many of a later generation, though not having the privilege alluded to, could hardly fail to be interested in one who sang so sweetly of "The dear auld toon wi' grey spire croon'd," and it was believed that they too would gladly support any movement of the kind indicated. In these suppositions the committee had accurately gauged the feelings of the community. The first to come forward and inaugurate the movement in the most handsome manner was the poet's life-long friend, Mr. Robert Barr of Arnotdale, and in less than three months a sum of thirty-eight pounds ten shillings was collected through the columns of the *Falkirk Herald*. Messrs. William Roberts & Sons, sculptors, Falkirk, were entrusted to carry out the work at a cost of £43. The subscriptions received, after deducting the necessary expenses, did not cover the outlay by £6 2s. 8d., whereupon Mr. Robert Barr, in addition to giving the handsome

donation of £5, very generously handed over the amount required to wipe out the deficit.

The following is a complete list of subscribers and the sums given:—

Robert Barr,	£5	0	0
F. Johnston, Woodville,	1	0	0
Archibald Christie,	0	10	0
Employés of *Falkirk Herald*, as follows:—William Anderson, 1s.; John Watt, 1s.; John Kidston, 1s.; Edward Callander, 5s.; George Hume, 1s.; Robert Lamb, 1s.; Robert Fraser, 1s.; David Robertson, 1s.; J. Hume, 2s. 6d.; John Walker, 5s.; F. Tremayne, 2s.; George I. Murray, 7s. 6d.; W. C. Murray, 2s. 6d.; John Rae, 2s. 6d.; A. Fowler, 1s.,	1	15	0
R. G. Drummond,	0	5	0
James Love,	0	5	0
John Beeby,	0	5	0
Borthwick Watson,	0	5	0
Ja. Wilson,	0	5	0
H. B. Watson,	0	5	0
Mrs. M'Nicol, Leith,	0	5	0
Provost Mackay, Grangemouth,	1	0	0
Bailie Mackay, do.,	1	0	0
Peter Wilkie, do.,	0	10	0
J. C. Dick, do.,	0	10	0
E. Christensen, do.,	0	10	0
A Friend, do.,	0	5	0
George Walker, do.,	0	5	0
J. Dodsworth, do.,	0	2	6
R. H. Coleman, do.,	0	2	6
A Friend,	0	10	0
Mrs. James Murphy, Falkirk,	1	1	0
A. W. Lawson, V.S.,	0	5	0
A Friend,	0	5	0
Robert Taylor, Graham's Road,	0	5	0
G. Harvey, High Station,	0	1	0
William Hopkin, Grangemouth,	0	10	0
J. P. Mackenzie, do.,	0	5	0
David Black, do.,	0	5	0
Alexander Winton, do.,	0	5	0
John Hislop, do.,	0	5	0
James M'Gilchrist, Dumbarton,	0	10	0
A Friend,	0	5	0

R. Hudson, Kirkintilloch, - - - - - -	£1	1	0
William Balloch, Grahamston, - - - - -	0	5	0
John Happer, Falkirk, - - - - - - -	0	5	0
D. M. Wilson, Redlands, Bo'ness, - - - - -	0	5	0
R. W. Rankine of Cunnoquhie, - - - - -	2	0	0
William Russell, Swinton, Manchester, - . - -	1	1	0
R. M. Sutherland of Wallside, - - - - -	1	0	0
Mrs. Mary B. Freeman, Bootle, Liverpool (daughter of the poet), - - - - - - - -	1	0	0
Mrs. Helen R. Scott, Bootle, Liverpool (sister-in-law of the poet), - - - - - - - -	1	0	0
Ralph Storey, Cockburnspath, - - -	0	10	6
David Murdoch, Comiston Place, Edinburgh, : -	0	10	0
John Lamb, Kelvinside, Glasgow, - - - - -	0	10	0
Mrs. Kier, George Street, Falkirk, - - - -	0	5	0
Mr. Lawrence, Grangemouth, - - - - - -	0	2	6
"A Bairn," Aston, Birmingham, - - - - -	0	1	0
David A. Rankine, Liverpool, - - - - - -	3	0	0
Robert Buchanan, Bootle, Liverpool (son of the poet),	2	2	0
Alex. Stevenson, Ella House, - - - - - -	0	10	0
Robert Russell, Grangemouth, - - . - -	0	5	0
John Gillespie, Linlithgow, - - - - - -	0	5	0
William Lightbody, Nairn, - - - - - -	1	0	0
Committee of Glasgow Re-Union of Falkirk Natives, -	1	0	0
R. M'Gilchrist, Kilsyth, - - - - - - -	0	10	0
Wallace Maxwell, Carron, - - - - -	0	5	0
W. Roberts & Sons, Sculptors, - - - - -	0	10	0
James Forgie, - - - - - - - - -	0	10	0
	£38	10	0

Unveiling of Monument in Falkirk Cemetery.

The following account of the unveiling of the Buchanan Memorial is reproduced from the *Falkirk Herald* of Saturday, October 7, 1899. The picture shown here of the scene after the unveiling is from a photograph taken by Mr. J. C. Brown, photographer, Falkirk :—

The chaste and imposing monument, erected by public subscription, through the columns of the *Falkirk Herald*, in the Falkirk Cemetery, to the memory of Robert Buchanan, the author of the "Dear Auld Hame" and other poems, was unveiled on Saturday afternoon by ex-Bailie Christie, Falkirk. The weather unfortunately was of the most unfavourable description. A strong gale of wind, accompanied with heavy rain, prevailed from an early hour in the morning. It was hoped that as the day advanced an improvement would take place, but this hope was not realised. Instead of improving, the conditions tended to become worse, and as the hour fixed for the ceremony approached the rain was coming down in torrents. It was accordingly anticipated by the committee that very few, if any, would be likely to turn out to witness the ceremony, and that being so, it was intended to drive out to the cemetery and intimate to any who had been courageous enough to venture forth that the ceremony would be postponed. On the committee arriving at the cemetery, however, they were surprised to find, though it wanted fifteen minutes of the advertised time for the proceedings to begin, there was a goodly number of people present and this number was constantly being augmented. This was not the only surprise of the day, but of that more anon. Meantime, it may be said, that after a brief deliberation, it was decided that the proceedings should be gone on with. In coming to this decision the committee were influenced by two considerations. In the first place, they recognised that even though the ceremony were postponed, there was no certainty that at this season of the year favourable weather conditions would prevail on any subsequent date fixed. In the second place, and what

"Here lies a genial son of song,
Whose native town reveres his name;
In Doric accents sweet and strong,
He sang for us 'The Dear Auld Hame.'"

THE MONUMENT AT THE GRAVE OF ROBERT BUCHANAN:
After the Unveiling, September 30th, 1899.

had probably greatest weight in bringing about the decision come to, was the reflection that it would be a pity to disappoint those who had under such discouraging conditions come out to witness the ceremony, especially as several had come from a distance. Then, again, while the matter was being considered, Mr. Macrae, superintendent of the cemetery, considerately and opportunely suggested that the company should adjourn to the recently erected offices near the entrance gate, in the interior of which, and in the verandah surrounding, shelter would be obtained from the storm while the speeches were being delivered. This suggestion was readily acted upon, and the ladies who were present were accommodated inside the building, while the gentlemen stood on and around the verandah and under the projecting roof. The company, which had by this time increased to pretty considerable dimensions, were grateful for the comparative comfort that was thus afforded. It was just about this time that a second surprise was experienced. A cab drove up with two lady occupants. They appeared to be strangers, and Mr. Fred. Johnston, convener of the committee, went forward to receive them, when he had the pleasure of being introduced to Mrs. Freeman, a daughter of Robert Buchanan's, who came from Liverpool in order to be present at the unveiling of the monument erected in memory of her father. Needless to say, her presence lent an additional interest to the proceedings. Mrs. Freeman and her friend, Mrs. M'Nicol, Leith, joined the company, and were just in time for the commencement of the proceedings, which were throughout of a most interesting and impressive nature. After prayer by the Rev. James Aitken, of the West U.P. Church, Falkirk,

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Fred. Johnston) said he had first to intimate apologies for absence from Mr. R. M. Sutherland of Wallside; Provost Mackay, Grangemouth; Mr. Lightbody, Nairn; Mr. R. W. Rankine of Cunnoquhie; ex-Provost Watson, Falkirk; Mr. William Russell, Manchester; Mr. William M'Indoe, Aston, Birmingham; Rev. John Scott, Camelon; Rev. James Aitchison, Falkirk; and Mr. James M'Gilchrist, Dumbarton. Continuing, the Chairman said they had met under very unfavourable weather conditions that day, but they would not be daunted by that (Hear, hear.) He thought one of the best testimonies to the great reverence in which Robert Buchanan's memory was held was the fact that so many had turned out under such very adverse circumstances indeed. (Hear, hear.) Robert Buchanan's name had been a household word in Falkirk for the last thirty years. Many of those present that day never saw him, but had only heard of him. He was the most outstanding poet of Falkirk, and his masterpiece

—the piece by which he was best known—might surely be called Falkirk's own anthem. (Applause.) That poem had but to be read that its beauty might be appreciated, and the more it was read the greater was their admiration for the talent and ability of Robert Buchanan. (Applause) In his day Buchanan wrote many poems, and singularly beautiful gems they were. Many of these had not seen, practically speaking, the light of day, and he understood, were these collected, they would make a very respectable volume indeed. He believed it was proposed to make an endeavour to collect these poems, and get them put in permanent book form, and he would do his best to further the proposal. (Applause.) He could only speak of Robert Buchanan and "The Dear Auld Hame" that day. The suggestion was recently made to him that "The Dear Auld Hame," being such a beautiful song, and breathing as it did the very essence of purity and noble thought, should be introduced into and sung occasionally in their schools. (Applause.) He hoped Mr. Love would introduce this song, which he thought should be known by every Falkirk "bairn." (Applause.) The idea of a monument had been in the air for a good many years. A reference to Robert Buchanan at a recent meeting of the Falkirk re-union stimulated the desire for a memorial among a large number of the people of Falkirk, while another factor which had brought Mr. Buchanan's name very prominently into the public gaze recently was the fact that an article on him was published in the "Harp of Stirlingshire," and he might say that that article was contributed by their friend Mr. Christie. (Applause.) Many of them would also remember what an ovation this favourite song received in the Town Hall, when Mr. Durward Lely, in the course of last winter, sang it at one of Mr. Love's concerts. Continuing, the chairman said that the movement, which culminated in that day's proceedings, was some time ago set on foot to erect a memorial to the poet, and the columns of the *Falkirk Herald* having been opened for subscriptions, money poured in without the remotest influence being brought to bear. (Applause.) Contributions came in in the most spontaneous manner, and nearly one hundred subscribers contributed their mite. (Applause) He (the chairman) was sorry that the late Mr. Buchanan's dearest friend—apart from his own family—Mr. Robert Barr, was not able to be present that day on account of the weather. Mr. Barr was one who took the deepest interest in the movement, was himself a very handsome subscriber, and had intimated that he would gladly pay any deficit which there might be on the cost of the monument. (Applause.) The epitaph on the monument had been written by Mr. William M'Indoe (a frequent contributor

to the Poet's Corner of the *Falkirk Herald* some years ago), of Aston, Birmingham. It was thoroughly in keeping with Robert Buchanan's own style. It was a homely stanza of verse, and just such a verse as Robert Buchanan would have liked most. (Applause.) In concluding, the chairman said they had one of Mr. Buchanan's daughters there that day—Mrs. Freeman, from Liverpool—who had come all that distance to attend the ceremony, and they were pleased and gratified to see her there. (Applause.) He then called on

Ex-Bailie CHRISTIE, who said he had to acknowledge the great honour conferred on him by his being asked to perform the duty of unveiling the monument. The only conceivable ground there might have been for asking him was that he introduced the subject at a re-union of the Falkirk natives in Glasgow about three years ago. He reminded those present that Robert Buchanan had written the song for their first re-union about thirty years previously, and suggested that something might be done to revive the poet's memory. Following these remarks a great many letters were sent to him (Mr. Christie) on the subject, which ended in the editor of the "Harp of Stirlingshire" asking him to contribute an article on Buchanan to that volume. Continuing, Mr. Christie said—In this extensive and lovely cemetery, which for a long time past has been the sole burial place for a population reckoned now to number from fifty to sixty thousand, and still increasing, there are numerous monuments and humbler tombstones erected in memory of the departed. If we knew the circumstances connected with each of these, we would have a varied and deeply pathetic record of human sorrow and bereavement. However varied the individual circumstances, there would be one element in common—that is, the desire on the part of the memorialists to perpetuate, in however inadequate a manner, the memory of departed loved ones, and record their sense of the loss of the

"Touch of the vanished hand,
And the sound of the voice that is still."

We have met to-day to add one more to the number of these monuments and our quota to the common element I have referred to. There is one difference, however, in our case which I think makes it more interesting, at anyrate more unique. I may say that I have been led to differentiate the circumstances by following the example of a gentleman much abler than myself—viz., Mr. Ure, M.P. for Linlithgowshire—who the other day performed a similar function to what I have the honour of doing to-day. The occasion was the unveiling of a monument to a friend of mine,

who was born near to Falkirk and spent so many useful years there—I mean the late Mr. Thomas Hope, of Bo'ness. Mr. Ure reminded his audience that the other monuments that surrounded them had been erected by relatives or immediate friends of the departed, but the one he was unveiling was a public work. The same is the case here. I take it this is the first public memorial stone in the cemetery. Where the others have been the work of more than one individual, these have been united either by the ties of family or close relationship, or perhaps as members of a religious congregation. In this case the subscribers are separated by mount, by stream, and sea, and the only bond of union is their desire to commemorate in some small way Robert Buchanan by placing on the spot where he lies, in the very midst of that scenery which was the theme of so much of his song, a monument to his memory. Some of these were his personal friends and knew his personal worth, which made his friendship so much prized, and his social qualities, which made his company sought after. Others knew him only as the poet whose simple lays had given them so much pleasure, and kept alive their patriotism and love of home, and made classic, for them at anyrate, many scenes connected with their early associations. Robert Buchanan, as is well known, was a native of Falkirk, and his short life was comparatively uneventful. He was born in Falkirk in 1835, and was educated at the old Parish School, after which he was apprenticed as a currier. His comrades of those days who are still with us delight to relate this "Rantin', rovin' Robin's" pranks and feats, and how he excelled all his comrades in all boyish sports and daring achievements. In fact, he then gave ample proof that "This waly boy will be nae coof." (Hear, hear.) During his apprenticeship he was studiously engaged in supplementing what education he had received at school, and became afterwards a Custom-House officer at Grangemouth, an occupation very closely allied to that of the great master of Scottish poetry. After ten years at Grangemouth, he was transferred to Dublin, and there appointed an examining officer. Further promotion was in store for him there, which, however, he did not long enjoy, as his earthly career was drawing to a close. During the last few years of his life his mind became deeply affected by the transitoriness of human enjoyments, and, adopting extremely religious views, he considered it his duty to devote the remainder of his muse entirely to religious subjects. On the last day of the year of 1875, his gentle spirit took its flight, and his remains were interred near the spot whereon we now stand, beside those of his beloved wife, who predeceased him the previous year. On that wintry day those who followed him

to the grave would be reminded of his own beautiful description of the morn of such a day—

> "Ower the upland day is glintin'
>   Wi' a pawkie, lauchin' e'e,
> And his crimson streaks are tintin'
>   Festooned snawbank, bush, and tree.
> Kingly Winter, crisp and hoary,
>   Rides the Ochil taps supreme,
> While the mantle o' his glory
>   Spreads awa' ower plain and stream."

There is one thing very much to be regretted, as the chairman has said, that is, that no edition of his works was published. His poems and songs are in the memories of many, but memory is a treacherous and decaying faculty; and besides, those people are passing away. These contributions must still exist in the newspapers in which they appeared. I quite agree that a good sequel to the work of to-day would be a compilation and publication of these in book form. (Applause.) Buchanan, it is needless to say, belonged to that class of Scottish poets who date from the great master, Burns, whose style they adopt. Like him, they choose the Doric, and they follow his rhyme. They are also largely imbued with his spirit. Scottish poetry dates backwards and forwards from Burns, and they are the humble disciples who in all lowliness take up the work of the master. (Applause.) Like him, also, Buchanan found sufficient to awaken his muse in his immediate surroundings. His native town and district had natural beauty enough, and his fellow-townsmen sufficient humanity, to afford material for his poetic genius. It is not claimed for Buchanan that he was a national poet. If so, it would have been the duty of the nation to commemorate his name. But what we do claim is that his work had sufficient merit to rank him amongst genuine poets, although his fame might be no more than local. Some of his poems appeared in such papers as the *Scotsman*, although the bulk of them, including the "Dear Auld Hame," appeared in the *Falkirk Herald*, and must have been read by a large number of people. It is just possible that had broken health, and latterly death itself, not cut short his work at an early period of life, Buchanan might have reached a much higher pinnacle of fame. I do not say that the words of Byron on Henry Kirke White—

> "Unhappy White, while life was in its spring,
> And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
> The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away,
> Which else had sounded an immortal lay."

—are exactly applicable to Buchanan, as his life was longer than that of White's. Still, I think I could have shown, if time had permitted, from many considerations, mainly psychological, that these words might not have been entirely inapplicable to our poet. However, it is not what he might have been, but what he was, that we rejoice in; not what he might have done, but what he did, that we are grateful for. (Applause.) The broken column, which we symbolise in this memorial stone, was sufficient to provide Falkirk with a true poet, of whom we are proud. His sweet songs are still with us, and his "Dear Auld Hame" has become the "Auld Lang Syne" of the Falkirk "Bairns." (Applause.) It may to some seem strange that the first public monument in this cemetery should be to a poet. Some may ask what has this great industrial community, depending upon its trade and commerce and the work of practical men, to do with poets and poetry? Sufficient answer to this might be that we live not by bread alone. But I have another answer, based on pure utilitarianism, and it is this—Our success as a manufacturing community depends not only on the solid construction of our manufactures, but upon the art thrown into our work. Now, art in design requires the development and cultivation of the eye and the hand, but behind that there must be the ideal. Art is the outward form and expression of inarticulate emotions and feelings. It is the work of the poet to develop the soul, as it is the work of the art teacher to train his pupils so as to give expression to the ideal that is in them. And as the soul is greater than the body, so we place the work of the poet on the highest scale. (Applause.) It will now afford me the utmost satisfaction to unveil the beautiful and chaste monument in commemoration of a name Falkirk does not desire to forget. (Applause.)

The Falkirk Parish Church Choir, under Mr. Love's leadership, then gave a sympathetic rendering of the dirge,

"Once more the spot with solemn awe we tread,
Where sleep the relics of our kindred dead,
Chant we our requiem mournfully and slow,
While our sad tears above their ashes flow.
Mem'ries, bright mem'ries, of each hallowed name,
Wake in each fond heart love's undying flame,
Still must we leave them, leave them here to rest,
Green be the turf above each noble breast."

The Rev. ALEXANDER LOUDON, B.D., was then called upon by the Chairman to propose a vote of thanks to ex-Bailie Christie, and to Mr. Love and his choir. Before doing so, the rev. gentleman requested to be allowed to express the pleasure he had in being

present on that occasion. The unveiling of a monument to commemorate the life of one of their local poets was, he said, a proof that the Falkirk "Bairns," busy as they were in making money, and adding house to house, were not insensible to the claims which poetry made upon them. (Hear, hear.) Robert Buchanan died at the close of 1875, and there might have been some excuse after the lapse of nearly a quarter of a century for allowing his memory to drop, but instead their attendance had been requested that day to revive that memory in the unveiling of a beautiful and singularly appropriate monument. (Applause.) It was well known that many present cherished the recollection of the poet's gifts, and none more so than ex-Bailie Christie, whose part in that interesting ceremonial was not only most fitting, but spoke to a steady warmth of a friendship and affection that death could not cool. (Applause.) Falkirk, he understood, was not rich in poets, but they could claim in Robert Buchanan to possess one who was a real poet, despite the paucity of his productions. (Applause.) They would rank him among that large group of minor poets, who were known as the authors of a few choice lyrics. They called them "minor poets" because they wrote little, but the little they had left indicated a power at its best that placed them in the front rank of lyrical writers. (Applause.) Jean Adam wrote "There's nae luck aboot the hoose;" Allison Rutherford wrote one version, and Jane Elliot another, of "The Flowers of the Forest"—lyrics as imperishable as the best written by Burns. They had a large number of poets and poetesses who were practically known as the authors of only one or two songs. Isobel Pagan wrote "Ca' the yowes tae the knowes;" Mrs. Grant, of Carron on Spey, "Roy's Wife;" Lady Anne Lindsay, "Auld Robin Gray;" John Ewan wrote "The boatie rows;" Adam Skirving, "Johnny Cope;" John Skinner, "Tullochgorum;" Alex. Ross, "Wooed and married an' a'," and "The rock and the wee pickle tow;" Hamilton, of Bangour, "The Braes o' Yarrow;" and Hector M'Neil, "I lo'ed ne'er a laddie but ane," "Come under my plaidie," "My Boy Tammy," and "Jeannie's black e'e"—all these were poets known simply as the authors of one or a very few songs. (Applause.) To write one good song, however, that reached the heart of the people was to leave behind a monument more imperishable than the one they had come to see unveiled that day. (Hear, hear.) But while these writers lived in their memories, and were enshrined in their hearts, they were compelled to express their gratitude in a form that would meet the eye, and hence the reason they were all gathered in that cemetery at that time. They would remember Robert Buchanan, he said, by singing the one real good song he

had left when they met together on the festive occasions of life and when they came to the cemetery, which, alas, they were compelled to do from week to week, they would remember, as they looked upon that monument, that though dead and lying among the dead, he was still speaking to them, and through the sweetness and beauty of his poetry and life was calling them to live in a way that would deprive death when it came of its victory. (Applause.) He concluded by calling upon the meeting to show their appreciation of the excellent address delivered by ex-Bailie Christie, and their thanks to Mr. Love and his choir for their valuable services that day. (Applause.)

Ex-Bailie Christie, in a word, acknowledged the vote of thanks, and said he had to thank Mr. Loudon also for having contributed these excellent sentiments which were so particularly pertinent to the occasion. (Applause.) He would not take up their time with any further remarks, but simply thank them in his own name, and that of Mr. Love, for the vote of thanks passed. Mrs. Freeman, the daughter of Mr. Buchanan, was with them, and would have liked to have said a word or two, but her feelings had so overcome her that she had asked him to say a word or two for her. He could not, however, undertake to say that word or two. It must be left to their own imagination. (Hear, hear.) He would not attempt to spoil it in clothing it with any words of his. (Hear, hear.) Mrs. Freeman was there, however, and knowing that she would inherit from her father his powers of sensibility, they could imagine what her feelings would be that day. (Applause.)

The company thereafter proceeded to the grave, where

Ex-Bailie Christie unveiled the monument, a description of which appeared in our last week's issue. Assembling round the monument, the party were photographed by Mr. J. C. Brown, Falkirk. "The Dear Auld Hame" was then sung in solo and chorus, Miss Jessie Dempster and Mr. George Mallice singing the first and second and third and fourth verses respectively, the choir, under Mr. Love's leadership, joining in the refrain. The song, so inseparably associated with the poet, was beautifully rendered, and was a touchingly appropriate termination of the ceremony. The following are the members of the Falkirk Parish Church Choir present at the unveiling and who took part in the singing:—Miss Jessie Dempster, Grangemouth; Miss Bella Dempster, Grangemouth; Miss Annie Anderson, Falkirk; Miss Lizzie Mitchell, Falkirk; Mr. George Mallice, Falkirk; Mr. William M'Laren, M.A., B.Sc., Falkirk; Mr. John Mitchell, Falkirk; Mr. John Stewart, Bainsford.

Ex-Bailie Christie proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Johnston for presiding on the occasion, and this having been heartily

accorded, the proceedings terminated with the singing of the National Anthem.

The arrangements for the ceremony were carried through by the committee appointed by the subscribers, and of whom the following were the members:—Mr. Fred. Johnston (convener), ex-Bailie Christie, Mr. James Love, and Mr. Geo. I. Murray, and considering the adverse circumstances that on Saturday had to be contended with, they have every reason to be satisfied with the result of their labours.

POEMS.

PEGGY M'NAIR.

So far as we can discover, this is the first piece Buchanan contributed to the Poet's Corner of the *Falkirk Herald*. It is found in the issue of January 24th, 1856, and is anonymous. Miss M'Nair was one of the poet's early friends. She became the wife of Mr. James Murphy, cooper, Falkirk, and is happily still among us, a much respected residenter.

Awa' whar the hills o' auld Scotland rise tow'ring
  Sublime in their grandeur, far out of the sea;
Awa' whar the cataract's white spray is show'ring,
  As it dances alang in its noisy glee;
Awa' whar the sons o' the Hielands tread proudly
  The heather, as free as the birds o' the air,
There lives a young lassie, a bonnie young lassie,
  A dear Hieland lassie—sweet Peggy M'Nair.

As glints the bright sun ower the bleak cliffs sae hoary,
  Sae keeks the sweet light frae her bonny blue e'e,
And a smile lingers round her wee mou' in its glory,
  And blends wi' her voice, sweetest music to me.
Aye smiling, beguiling ilk ane, though nae wiling
  Kens Peggy; for pure as her ain mountain air
Is the heart of this lassie, this bonnie young lassie,
  This dear Hieland lassie—sweet Peggy M'Nair.

The wild flowers that bloom in the green dell sae bonnie,
When glist'ning wi' dew and their blossomings rare,
Are rich in their beauty, but richer than ony
Is Nature's ain flowret—sweet Peggy M'Nair.
O, Scotland; dear Scotland; thy beauties are mony,
But nane o' them a' are sae faultless and fair
As this bonnie lassie, this charming young lassie,
This dear Hieland lassie—sweet Peggy M'Nair.

MY AIN, MY MARY DEAR.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald* of February 14th, 1856.

My ain, my Mary dear! nae glittering wreath I bring
To busk your winsome broo sae fair, as emblem o' the spring;
I bring to thee, unknown to change frae weary year to year,
A heart that lives for thee alane—my ain, my Mary dear!
It's a' that I can offer noo; and nae unmeaning praise
Lies hid within the artless lines o' Robin's humble lays.
Na, na! It gushes frae the heart, as wistfu' back I peer,
And think on happy days gane by, my ain, my Mary dear!

How lovely bloomed my Mary on the little village green!
Langsyne, amang the lassies fair thou wert the chosen queen!
And weel ye looked the lofty name, tho' wanting queenly gear;
For thou wert fairest 'mang them a'—my ain, my Mary dear!
And aft I've gazed in fond delight, and watch'd thy bonnie e'e,
To read within its sweet blue depths ae blink o' love for me;
And when at last you whispered hope, nae music to my ear
Was half sae sweet as that low voice, my ain, my Mary dear!

Doun whar' the bonnie burnie runs, beneath the hazel tree,
We've sat in sweet forgetfulness till dew draps gem'd the lea;
And wee stars twinkled ower our heads frae out the azure sphere,
And woke us frae our dreams of bliss—my ain, my Mary dear!

Tho' Time has warstled round since then and brought us
muckle care,
Yet still you've been the same to me, the puir man's treasure
rare ;
And when auld age tak's me awa' and lays thee, Mary, near,
We'll meet again in realms of love—my ain, my Mary dear.

THE LASSIE AWA'.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald* of April 17, 1856.

The words have been set to a melody by Mr. John Beeby, but never published.

The last streaks o' sunshine ower red hills were dying,
And blossoms were cow'ring 'mong white wreathing snaw,
The boughs o' the bleak woods were plaintively sighing
Their last hymn to Autumn and the lassie awa'.

When sweet Peggy left us, how sad was the partin' ;
Her auld mither lingered fu' lang in the ha',
And tenderly blessed her, while saut tears were startin',
And dimmed the blue e'e o' the lassie awa'.

Her wee sister Nelly stood wistfully peering,
And grat tho' she kenn'd nae the meaning ava',
While ilk ane strove kindly, wi' words that were cheering,
To still the sair heart o' the lassie awa'.

Puir Robin, wha lang cam' aboot the auld dwelling,
Hung back in the shadow that flitted the wa',
That nane there might see how his fond heart was swelling
To part wi' his Peggy—the lassie awa'.

Nae mair her rich laugh rings around the dull ingle,
The gem o' the circle, the loved ane o' a'
Has gane like a sunbeam, 'mang strangers to mingle,
And nocht's left but sadness while Peggy's awa'.

We've tasted the pleasures and supped in the blessing
Of life's happy moments; but mingled in ga'
Are the bright smiles of Fortune, tho' fond the caressing,
When wanting dear Peggy, the lassie awa'.

A GUID NEW YEAR.

This New-Year's greeting appears in the *Falkirk Herald* of January 1st, 1857, and is anonymous.

A Guid New Year I wish ye a',
Friends, cronies, neebours, roun' and roun';
May ill luck aye keep far awa'
Frae ilka "bairn" o' this auld toun.
Around the homely social board,
Let friendship be the friendly cry,
And ilk gudewife will count her hoard,
And cheerfully cement the tie.

The auld year's gane—let strife gang too,
And gudewill tak' the vacant place;
We'll see the difference soon, I trow,
In mony an honest, happy face.
Then canker'd enmity shall cease,
And what was wrong shall right appear,
And soon the olive bough of peace
Shall flourish green through a' the year.

Sae let us try in right gudewill,
To mak' life happy while we can,
And as we slowly near the hill
Extend the friendly helping han'.
United a' in kindly ban',
We'll climb thegither—nane will fa'—
And when we reach the tap we'll stan'
And bless the Hand that led us a'.

But I maun quat, for weel I ken
  The day is bringing in the thrang,
And nought is heard, in but and ben,
  Save laughing, jokes, or canty sang.
And on the first day o' the year,
  We'll dance and sing our cares awa' ;
Enjoy life as lang's we're here—
  A Guid New Year I wish ye a'.

WINTER'S WEARING AWA'.

Written January 20th, 1857, and published in the *Falkirk Herald* two days later.

The snell win's o' winter are deeing in sadness,
  An' spring is at han' wi' its wild blooming flowers ;
The morn o' the summer time's dawnin' in gladness,
  And budding the branches o' lang wither'd bowers ;
The clear crystal streamlet, meandering in freedom,
  Sweeps merrily onwards through meadow and haugh,
Now singing low music, now wildly careering
O'er cascade, the silver spray far on high rearing,—
  Tells joyously winter is wearing awa'.

Hush ! Heard ye that sang ? 'tis the sweet speckled mavis,
  Far up on the tap o' yon sere-tinted tree
Carolling his ca'-note, while cranny and crevice
  Are fled by their tenants to join in the glee.
The wee chirping robin and wild heather lintie,
  The blackbird, the bullfinch, the shilfa and a',
Pipe loud in the medley o' Nature's ain chorus,
To droon the rem'brance o' cauld biting boreas,
  And the snaw wreaths o' Winter now wearing awa.'

But, better than a' that, our ain bonnie lassies
  Hae faulded their mantles and laid the plaid bye—
Sure emblems that Spring will revive the red roses
  That bloomed on their cheeks ere the Winter was nigh.

Sae hail the fair harbingers ! bless their sweet faces,
  The warld would be desert, though ever sae braw,
If wanting our ain smiling lassies—dear treasures !
To gladden our journey through life in its pleasures,
  Till the winter o' auld age shall wear us awa'.

MAGGIE.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald,* March 12, 1857.

A bonnie wee thing, peeping through the dawn
  Of glorious womanhood, wi' virgin smile,
Modest and timid as the rose new blawn,
  And hung wi' gems o' Nature's rarest spoil.

Saft gouden ringlets waving in the breeze
  That whispers doun the glen on zephyr wing,
Or stirs the green-tinged mantle o' the trees
  That bloom with gladness in the flush of Spring.

When flowers are blossoming, the violets hue
  Is queen ower a' the bonnie tints I see ;
But oh ! 'tis naething to the heavenly blue
  That circles round in Maggie's laughing e'e.

A wee, wee mou', twa lips o' rosy dye
  Half parted aft shows pearls white as snaw,
While dimpling smiles are ever lingering nigh,
  And blend wi' music words that sweetly fa'.

These ye hae, Maggie ; wad ye still hae mair ?
  A heart that kens nae meaning throb for ill ;
'Tis pure and guileless, and as richly fair
  As dews that sparkle on the lofty hill.

And aye I'll sing my bonnie lassie's praise
  Wi' a' the ardour of a lover's strain,
Till Time rows by his weary wintry days,
  And Summer smiles on Maggie a' my ain.

JULY.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald*, July 16, 1857.

O'er the purple-crested mountains,
Scattered clouds of silver hue
Hang in gladness, richly blending
With the deep and peerless blue:
Phœbus, in his golden glory,
Lights with majesty the sky,
Ladening branches old and hoary,
In the month of sweet July.

From the meadows in the morning,
Wild larks soar on dewy wings,
And with praises sweet Aurora,
Till the drowsy welkin rings;
While the low-tuned zephyrs, seeming
Like some gentle maiden's sigh,
Rove the woods with beauty teeming,
In the month of sweet July.

Down the glen the streamlet wanders,
Laughing here with joyous glee,
Or with soft, low music singing
A sweet plaintive lullaby.
Fraught with life and beauty shining,
Violets reflect the sky,
While their hundred tints are twining,
In the month of sweet July.

Summer! thou art ever welcome,
With thy fair meads and bowers—
With thy silver dew-gems glancing
O'er the sward of spangled flowers—
With thy morning songs to lighten
Weary hearts that listen by,
Care will flee and gloom will brighten
In the month of sweet July.

A NEW YEAR'S SANG FOR FA'KIRK.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald*, December 31, 1857.

Around the ingle bleezing bright,
  Wi' twa three cronies dear,
We gather on this happy night,
  To welcome in the year.
Anither year o' toil and care,
  Sair fechts for right or wrang,
Wi' blinks o' sunshine here and there
  To cheer the road we gang.

As round our merry circle flows
  The laugh, the sang, the jest,
Care flees awhile, and sorrow goes
  Unbidden frae each breast.
Joy sits supreme on every cheek,
  Hope keeks frae ilka e'e;
Prudence is by, but winna speak—
  She weel can wait a wee.

Noo, cries friend Tam, a bumper fill;
  Come, mak yoursel's at hame,
And pledge me a' wi' right guidwill,
  The toast I'm gaun to name.
It winna be the auld sang ower,
  To nobles or a croon;
But here's success, and wealth, and power,
  To dear auld Fa'kirk Toon.

To dear auld Fa'kirk—may she soar
  Aboon Time's nipping hand,
While ilk year sees her more and more
  An honour to our land.
Her institutions, may they rise,
  And bring to age and youth
That glorious light, which never dies,
  Of Wisdom and of Truth.

Success to ilka ane wha rules
  Her council and her laws,
And ill luck seize the silly fools
  Wha wad disown her cause.
Sae to your feet, lads, send it doon
  Wi' a rattling, roaring cheer—
Lang life and health to Fa'kirk Toon,
  And a happy, blyth New Year.

THE DAWN OF SPRING.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald* February 11th, 1858.

At the solemn hour of twilight,
  By the merry singing stream,
Lone and pensively I wander,
  Wrapt in fancy's fitful dream.
All along the west horizon
  Hazy hills are steeped in gold,
O'er whose bright tops in dazzling glory
  Day's own sunny orb hath rolled.

Above me stars are mutely geming
  The silent canopy of blue,
And the silver queen of evening
  Spangles fairy meads with dew.
Through the woods the soft wind sighing
  Finds sweet echo to its song
In the glittering cascade laughing
  Mer'ly as it leaps along.

Overhead in clusters twining,
  Naked boughs of winter hue,
Nurse the tender young buds shooting
  Forth to busy life anew ;

While around my feet are lying
  Mingled tints of bloom and sere,
Sweet flowers bursting into blossom,
  Emblems of the infant year.

As the misty shadows deepen
  Over mountain, wood and glen,
Night slowly draws her sable curtain
  O'er the drowsy scene again.
And the breathing world in silence
  Goes to dreamy sleep at will,
All save Nature, who, ne'er sleeping,
  Plies her busy fingers still,

Till the glorious light of morning
  Sees her on her crimson throne,
Smiling on the mystic wonders
  Wrought by her fair hands alone ;
While her song of gladness riseth
  Far above on matin wing,
Pouring forth their artless welcome
  To the gentle dawn of Spring.

MARY O' THE BROOM-CLAD HILL.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald*, July 8, 1858.

The wee stars blink ower the white surg'd sea,
  And night's gentle queen, the clear moon,
Smiles doon through the blue on the dew gemm'd lea,
  And the sweet flowers gathered aroun'.
The blackbird's choir in the green robed bower
  Is hushed, and the murmuring rill
Alane croons its sang, while I muse at this hour
  On Mary o' the broom-clad hill.
          Sweet Mary,
          Wee Fairy,
    Mary o' the broom-clad hill.

The sun gleaming through 'mang the saft snawy clouds,
Enshrined 'mid the gowd o' the morn;
The rustling sang o' the green waving woods,
And spring wi' her beauties new born,
Are bonnie to look, and blythsome to hear,
But the nook in my heart canna fill;
For they want the sweet face and the voice ever dear
O' Mary o' the broom-clad hill.
Sweet Mary,
Wee Fairy,
Mary o' the broom-clad hill.

She's a bonnie wee flower, and I ken she's my ain,
For the tale o' her heart's in her e'e;
And aften I think that an angel hath ta'en
Her form on the earth for a wee,
To lift the dark clouds from my soul and reveal
A glimpse o' that heaven, to fill
My breast wi' that joy that kens nae alloy,
Wi' Mary o' the broom-clad hill.
Sweet Mary,
Wee Fairy,
Mary o' the broom-clad hill.

ADDRESS TO FA'KIRK

AFTER THE CELEBRATION OF THE BURNS CENTENARY.

On January 25th, 1859, the centenary of the birth of the poet Burns was celebrated in Falkirk with great heartiness. At a convivial gathering held in the Red Lion Hotel, Provost Thomas Kier presided, and among those present, and who addressed the assembly, was Mr. John Begg, of Kinneil Iron Works, Bo'ness, a grand-nephew of Burns. So delighted was Buchanan with the manner in which his fellow-townsmen rose to the occasion, that he wrote the following poem, which was published in the *Falkirk Herald* of February 10th, 1859.

Auld Fa'kirk, honour to thy name,
Wide spread the pinions o' thy fame
Ower a' the warl', like ony flame,
When nichts are blawy ;
And sorrow come, and muckle shame,
On them that ca' ye.

Though frosty noo thy pow and auld,
Thy haffets wearin' thin and cauld,
And just a thocht less crouse and bauld,
As in gane days,
There's warm hearts within your fauld
To sing thy praise.

Lang hae ye warstled wi' the warl',
And often stood its angry snarl ;
Yet richt ne'er at your heart did dirl,
Nor waited lang,
Till a' your pith o' sense ye'd hurl
Upon the wrang.

Hoo mony changes hae ye seen
Sin' first upon this shifting scene
Ye raised yer heid fu' braw and bien
Upon the muir ?
And, keeking round wi' sturdy mien,
Said, "Bide ye there."

Ye saw the time when Wallace wicht,
Flang owre his plaid and grippit ticht
His big braidsword, whose very sicht
Wad mak ye trum'le;
And strove to crush oppression's micht,
And tyrants hum'le.

And on that day, the bluidy day,
When puir auld Scotia stood at bay,
And gallant Græme and mony mae
Death's portion shared—
Ye saw them laid amang the clay
I' your auld kirk-yaird.

And there they sleep, nae mair to feel
Upon their necks the tyrant's heel—
But yet their spirits, brave and leal,
Remain amang
Auld Scotia's sons, as true as steel,
Where'er they gang.

In every clime, in every land—
Whare'er o' Scotia's sons a band
Can grup ilk ither by the hand
Wi' friendly nod,
Then hills and mountains winna stand
Upon their road.

And when on some far distant shore,
Amid the deadly battle's roar,
Inspir'd by glorious deeds of yore,
They draw their swords,
Then, charging, make terrific splore
'Mang craven hordes.

Or see them scale the grisly hicht,
Whaur freedom's foes in countless micht
Sends death amang them, left and richt,
Wi' murderous skill;
Yet aye their cry, clear, ringin', bricht,
Is onward still!

But ANE has sung this glorious strain
In lines, whose lustre ne'er shall wane
As lang's the gowden sun shall reign
Ower earthly scene;
Yer trusty "bairns" will aiblins ken
The BARD I mean.

He was a noble-hearted chiel,
An' loved auld Scotia dear an' weel,
An' sung her sangs wi' sturdy zeal,
Nor fash'd his thoom
Hoo folk, to wham sycophants kneel,
Micht glunch and gloom.

He had his fauts, I dinna doot them;
But are there ony folk without them?
Though some there are wha try to clout them
Wi' holy grins.
But rive the rags frae roun' about them,
Then view their sins.

Lord! had he been alive the noo,
And ony o' the slandering crew
Just even daured to ope a mou'
Against his fame,
His satire shafts wad pierced them through
And show'd their shame.

But weel they ken that Rab, puir man,
Can ne'er review his ain auld lan',
And sae they hurl, curse, and ban'
Upon his heid;
And wi' a' hellish arts they can
Insult the deid.

Oh, noble Burns! had I thy power,
I'd scourge the hounds frae door to door,
And drive them to some barren moor,
Whaur their dreed howls
Micht wauk auld Nick in some dark hour
To claim their souls.

And Fa'kirk, ye have lived and seen
A' this, and muckle mair, I ween;
And aften tears have dimmed your een
Wi' grief and shame,
To hear sic trash, no worth a preen,
Traduce his name.

But there is ane within your toon
Shall tentie watch when ony loon
May cater ill, or ca' Rab doon—
Then redd the road,
He'll tak their length wi' broken croon
Upon the sod.

Lang live his honest thinking heart—
May Fa'kirk aye can claim a part
O' his strong arm, and every art
That he can wield,
Pierce Robin's foes like ony dart,
Till ance they yield.

Weel did he earn the laurelled chair
That nicht when a' thy "bairns" were there,
And offer up their kindly prayer
To kindly heaven,
And thanks that Rab, a gem sae rare,
To us was given.

And what sweet streams o' pure delight
Gushed forth on that ae happy night,
Ages and ages yet shall write,
And glory shine
On a' that laid their wee bit mite
At Robin's shrine.

My dear auld toon, I'm unco prood
To see thy name among the crood
That paid just tribute to the good
Immortal bard,
May virtue's ever honour'd snood
Be your reward.

And sae, fareweel, but ere I gang,
May every earthly blessing lang
Creep roun' about and keep frae wrang
Thine honour'd wa's,
And may ye rear braw sons o' sang
To sing your cause.

Success to him * wha rules the roast,
Lang may his tongue wag owre a toast,
And pledge again auld Scotia's boast
Wi' three times three;
Speak out, man, Tam, ne'er mind the cost,
Gin richt you be.

* Provost Thomas Kier.

Lang life to ilka honest chiel
Wha tak's his turn at the wheel,
And guides ye onward hale and weel,
And tents your gear—
Wi' hearts like thae, the very deil
Ye needna fear.

And when ilk blessing croons your share,
Sae that ye canna wish for mair,
Just turn ye roun' wi' cannie care,
And gently gie
A' kindly thanks ye hae to spare
To yours, R.B.,

GRANGEMOUTH.

AN APPEAL TO THE "BAIRNS" OF FALKIRK FOR GARIBALDI, THE HERO OF ITALIAN FREEDOM.

Annoyed at the apathy of his fellow-townsmen in not bestirring themselves to give pecuniary support to Garibaldi, the poet gave expression to his pent-up feelings in the following stirring verses. These were published in the *Falkirk Herald* of August 9th, 1860, and called forth the following letter to the Editor :—

SIR,—Next to the rapture felt that we ourselves can wake the lyre, and that others perhaps scarcely daring to entertain a hope so high, "has the power divine." But if the yet almost unknown bard is a kinsman and a friend, by so much more will our pleasure be exalted. This delight was ours in reading the "Original Poetry" in your last publication, the authorship of which the initials "R.B." partly disclose and slightly conceal. In our estimation the lines are real poetry, and if anyone can read them—whatever the stage at which he has arrived in the matter of education—without emotion, he may safely take it for granted that he is utterly destitute of poetic feeling, and may, without any sacrifice, abandon in all future

time the pursuit of pleasurable excitement in elevated writing and long resounding lines. We doubt not that "R.B." is a "bairn," and it will be his own fault if he is not "a credit to us a'," for it is evidently in him so to be.

He has a lofty calling and a high responsibility, and the "bairns" should, on the other hand, be proud to recognise and foster their gifted kin. That "R.B." has no small measure of fraternal feeling is very apparent from the manifestation of it so delicately put in the lines alluding to our Provost *—

And where is he, of noble hearts the chief,
  Who foremost ranks in every worthy cause,
Whose hand is open to the poor's relief,
  And metes with justice Falkirk's new-born laws.

But we had almost forgot, in saying this much, that "R.B." has wider sympathies, and his lines are a powerful appeal on behalf of "the hero of Italian Freedom" to the Falkirk "bairns." If the Provost does not afford his townsfolk on opportunity of aiding also in the good cause we shall be disappointed. Let him read the "appeal."

TWA "BAIRNS."

Appended to the letter was the following Editorial note:—

[It is scarcely necessary to say that we concur in the opinions expressed by our correspondents. "There is many a blossom born to blush unseen," etc., and we sincerely desire to see "R.B." emerge into noon-day radiance, as has done the gallant Garibaldi, to whose cause he has dedicated his patriotic strain, and as has a few only of the benevolent deeds and desirable public actions of our worthy Chief Magistrate.—ED. *F.H.*]

Falkirk, my birth-place, home where my youthful days
  Were spent in joy, in innocence, and glee,
Again sweet fancy fondly homage pays,
  And wakes the lyre in loving strains to thee;
Yet not thy glory let this measure be,
  But to the heart make strong and warm appeal
For the great hero o'er the sunny sea,
  Who, lone, unaided, with his own good steel,
  Hath made a tyrant to his victims kneel.

* The Chief Magistrate's Chair was filled at this time by Mr. Thomas Kier.

Brothers and sisters, who in every cause
  That has a semblance or a form of right,
Come forth to battle, scorning world applause,
  And wrongs, dark snares, and foul devices blight.
Why view inactively the glorious fight,
  And listen heedlessly the country's cry ?
While tens of thousands contribute their mite
  To the brave patriot 'neath another sky,
  Falkirk, oh shame ! stands lingering idly by,

Oh, where is he * who erst in lofty strains,
  That made us sad, rejoice, and weep in turns,
Threw deathless lustre o'er the cold remains
  Of Scotland's bard, immortal Robert Burns ?
Who, in his heart of hearts, for ever mourns
  The heavy-laden of whatever shore,
Whose manly pride dark despotism spurns,
  Exults in freedom and the battle's roar,
  Where Scotia's sons victorious columns bore.

And where is he, of noble hearts the chief,
  Who foremost ranks in every worthy cause,
Whose hand is open to the poor's relief,
  And metes with justice Falkirk's new-born laws !
Awake ! arise ! while writhing freedom gnaws
  The galling chains of many long, long years,
And snatch from Tyranny's devouring jaws
  The swarthy victims, born of pains and fears,
  And reap a blessing in their smiling tears.

Awake ! arise ! come each and every one
  Who holds the honour of his country dear,
Time flows apace and much is to be done
  To win that crown that reigns triumphant here—

* We presume that the reference here is to Mr. James Law, builder, whose poems on "Burns" gained first and second prizes offered in 1859. See the "In Memoriam" on Mr. Law written by Buchanan.

Reigns on our mountains, hoary grown and sere,
  Within the stream that dances merrily
O'er the rock-bound crystal bubbling weir,
  Singing the old, old song, that we
  Are the blest sons of glorious liberty.

And shall we not to such a state as ours
  Help the brave patriot from our ample store ?
Already shadows fell the member'd hours,
  The Bourbons' House shall tyrannise no more,
While acclamations peal from every shore,
  And find an echo o'er the pathless sea.
Help ! but a little till the tumult's o'er,
  And Scotia's sons with glowing hearts shall see
  Another land like Scotia's Isle as free.

GRANGEMOUTH. R. B.

AUNTIE MARY.

This song was published in the *Falkirk Herald* of January 23rd, 1864, and is anonymous. It is, however, the composition of Buchanan, a copy of it having been found in his desk after he died. The subject of the song was Miss Mary Rankin, Mrs. Buchanan's elder sister. She settled in Australia in 1867, and married Mr. Robert Lister in Melbourne, and now resides with her husband and family on their own farm near Ballarat.

Beside the ingle's blythesome blink,
  When stars glint through the carry,
I set me down to twine a wreath
  For winsome Auntie Mary.
But weel I wat the wale o' flowers,
  The sweetest and the rarest,
Can little grace to Mary gie,
  Sae fair among the fairest.

The gouden beams that upward speel,
  And ope the gates o' morning,
Lingering in beauty on the hills,
  A' nature's wilds adorning,
Bring to the droosy warld again
  Joys in unstinted measure,
As Mary's form within oor beild
  Brings peace, and love, and pleasure.

In streams, when singing simmer sangs,
  I hear her merry lauching ;
In "lambkins" louping ower the braes,
  I see her sportive daffing ;
Sae pure in heart, nae wardly guile
  To make her wardly-wary ;
They're far to seek, and ill to fin',
  Like winsome Auntie Mary.

The modest blush adorns her cheeks,
  And 'neath the lang dark lashes,
Shading the fleet emotions that
  Twa sunny blue een flashes,
Love princely reigns—such love as mak's
  Life's weary burdens lichter,
And time but trims the shining lamp,
  To burn mair pure and brichter.

She's dear to me, an' oh ! to mine,
  Than a' the world she's dearer ;
And in an' roon about oor hearts,
  She every day is nearer.
Wee namesake, Mary, lisps her praise,
  And in her prattle seemeth
To live but in her gentle voice,
  And smiles that kindly beameth.

The woods are ringing rich wi' sang,
 Cauld winds awa' are wearing,
And sweet flowers bursting into bloom,
 Tells spring again is nearing;
But Time, wi' a' his stern decrees.
 To mak' auld Nature vary,
Can never change the love we bear
 To winsome Auntie Mary.

THE WRAITH.

Published in the *Falkirk Herald* January 23rd, 1864.

'Twas a wild winter's nicht, an' the stars glimmered drear'ly,
 And snell frae the nor'-east the win' fiercely blew,
When I spied ower the muir to the lass I lo'ed dearly—
 My ain bonnie Mary, sae loving and true.

The moon was just glintin' oot ower the dark mountain,
 And red lowed her tap as she struggled to rise;
Enraptured I stood by the snaw-flooded fountain,
 And watched her speel up to her throne in the skies.

Then love's saft emotions brocht thochts o' dear Mary,
 And the lost loving blink o' her bonnie blue e'e,
And a sweet whisper seemed to say, "Why do ye tarry?
 O come, my dear laddie, I'm waiting for thee."

Sae I trudged aff anew, ower the lang muirland eerie,
 Wi' luve in my breast, and wi' fricht at my heels,
Whiles whistling to keep mysel' cantie and cheerie,
 And to scaur frae the bleak road dreed witches and deils.

Now dark clouds cam' rowing, the bricht moon obscuring,
Whan, whisht! I saw something that brak the cauld sweat,
A lang eldrich bogle was after me scouring,
In my lugs rung the clatterin' o' uncanny feet.

I shooted out "Murder"; but half-waukened burdies
Chirped a' the response, sae I off like a deer;
Through deep dubs I scampered, whiles up to the hurdies,
The hair o' my heid staunin' straucht up wi' fear.

The staff fled my han', and my gude Sunday bannet
Lap richt aff my heid. When I heard the lood roar
O' the grim bairded ghaist, flesh and bluid couldna stan' it,
And I clean soothed awa' at my ain Mary's door.

To bring back my senses, a pail o' cauld water
Wi' nae sparing hands was soosed into my face,
And a score o' auld wives, in a tongue chorus yatter,
Speired how I had rowed ower in siccan a place.

"Gude preserve me, I'm done for, my end is fast nearing,"
I groaned, wi' a mournfu' shake o' the heid;
"For I've seen my wraith, and hae got sic a fearing
As will haunt and torment me till ance I am deid."

Just then the crood parted, and in cam' my Mary,
But the hard-hearted limmer was lauching ootricht,
While her auld mither cried, "Come without mair flagarry,
Let's hear what ye ken o' this wonerfu' fricht."

"It wisna his wraith—O ye puir donnert buddie,"
She skreiched, and the auld wives a' echoed the soun',
"The bogle ye saw was black tinkler Jock's cuddie,
That followed the hay cart wi' Tam to the toon."

GRANGEMOUTH. R. B.

WILLIAM HUME.

Died 18th August, 1864.

The tragic circumstances under which this much respected townsman met his death drew from the poet the stanza given below. Many will recollect that on the morning of the 18th August, 1864, while superintending the construction of a well in Falkirk Brewery the arched wall gave way, and Mr. Hume was buried alive amid a mass of brick and *debris*.

With eyes tear dimmed, with solemn steps and slow,
Marshal him sadly to his last abode—
  Dust unto dust. Before Thy footstool low
  We bow to Thy decree, Almighty God,
Who hath been pleased to take from life's dark road
  Unto the mansions of eternal light—
Where never care nor sorrow's footsteps trod—
A soldier who has fought the glorious fight,
Not with the sword of battles, but in might
  Of God's own gifts—the kindly beaming eye,
The gentle smile, and overflowing love
To all things fair that on the earth doth move--
  And to his Father's house beyond the bright blue sky.
Now death where is thy sting, now grave where is thy victory.

GRANGEMOUTH. R. B.

GRANGEMOUTH GLORIES—No. II.

Written by Special Express.

Air—"The Chesapeake so Bold."

This piece was written by Buchanan in September, 1864, and appeared in the *Falkirk Herald* of October 1st, under the *nom de plume* of "Ivanhoe." The occasion was the revival, after a lapse of thirteen years, of the rowing matches and Scottish games at Grangemouth. The weather was of the finest, and the beauty and *élite* of the Port were present in large numbers. In addition to the metrical version of the scene, which we give below, Buchanan, as local correspondent for the *Herald*, fully described the various events of the day.

Come gather, gather, boys, and sing the glorious joys
  Of a day that old and young will long remember, O;
"When the people of the Port came out to see the sport"
  On the famous twenty-seventh of September, O.

Aurora far and high, when she smelt the monstre pie
  That was baking hot by Meikle,* nice and handy, O,
Said, "Now I'll don my best ('tis by special request),
  And appear in golden colours quite the dandy, O."

Then the birds in chorus sang, and the woods with music rang,
  And the streamlets tripped their windings, featly dancing, O;
And the waves upon the sea kicked up their heels so free,
  Like a regiment of moss-troopers gaily prancing, O.

From truck to deck the ships were clad with spangled strips
  That fluttered 'mongst the zephyrs of the morning, O,
And the glisten of their sheen added glory to the scene,
  And banished worldly troubles without warning, O.

In gay and smiling ranks, all along the verdant banks
  Of the deep, unruffled, flowing River Carron, O,
There were lilies of the valleys, and Sallys from our alleys,
  Queens of Sheba and fair roses of old Sharon, O.

* Baker in Grangemouth, and famous for his pies. His shop was a favourite resort of young men on Saturday evenings.

But now the sports begun. Hark! there's M'Culloch's * gun,
  Watt and Aitken's at their station tight and handy, O;
While Kelly's † ready by, with the whole thing in his eye—
  He's the boy, you'll all admit, that's worth his candy, O.

M'Culloch's gun again—now they're off all might and main,
  Like the witches wildly chasing Tam o' Shanter, O;
Bearing round the starboard tack—amid thundering cheers they're back,
  "Caller Ou'" winning gamely in a canter, O.

O 'twas a glorious day, and the park in grand array
  An Eden of the fairest flowers resembled, O,
That ne'er was 'neath the sun, "I'll bet ten pounds to one,"
  Such a galaxy of beauteous girls assembled, O.

There were Misses S. and C., and the lovely Misses T.,
  And a host of peerless beauties smiling sweetly, O;
Mrs. Grundy sure herself—the old, crusty, meddling elf—
  Would for once have vowed they'd all behave discreetly, O.

And far beyond compeer, there was princely Provost Kier,
  With the genial heart of Newton Mains, ‡ brave Sandy, O;
They're kings o' trumps them both, and if you're nothing loth,
  Why, we'll drink their healths in nothing else than brandy, O.

But again begins the fun, and round the ring they run,
  While the cheering woke the echoes of old panson, O;
And olden hearts were warmed, and younger ones were charmed
  With the leaping, tossing, vaulting, and the dancing, O.

O 'twas a gorgeous day, but at last it passed away,
  'Mid the burnished clouds of dazzling golden glory, O;
But ne'er while time goes by will its remembrance die,
  But will live enthroned, immortal in fame's story, O.

* Captain M'Culloch, who officiated as Commodore and started the boats.

† Mr. James Kelly, to whose labours much of the success of the gathering was due.

‡ Alexander Thomson, Esq.

A NEW YEAR'S RHYME FOR FA'KIRK.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO PROVOST KIER.

First published in the *Falkirk Herald* of December 31st, 1864.

Ower snaw-crooned mountain, wood, and lea,
Grim winter glints wi' a cauld-rife e'e,
Whistling, in shrill and bitter glee,
His ancient theme—
On frozen earth and stormy sea
I reign supreme.

The auld year's race has nearly sped,
On lichtening wing the time has fled,
And saxty-four has made her bed
And fareweel ta'en;
Twa hours will snap the brittle thread,
And whar's she gane?

But draw anower your chairs, ilk freen,
Wese to the fore, yet hale and bien,
And like to see the blades grow green
On spangled fiel'—
The gude be praised for't, wha'd compleen
As langs their weel?

The cheerfu' ingle's flich'ring bleeze,
A clean hearthstane and what ye please
Is at your wull, sae tak' your ease;
Fling oot care's stang,
While I will gie my pipes a heeze
And lilt a sang.

A canty sang we a' can sing,
No nane the waur though auld its ring
And it may touch a tender string
In ilka breast,
That's fand 'neath Fa'kirk's sheltering wing
A cosy nest.

Auld Fa'kirk, dearly lo'ed: O wha
Wad shameless wrangle wi' or thraw
A "bairn" for gien yer horn a blaw?
Confoond the loons,
May soor misfortun' seek their fa'
And cloor their croons.

Ages hae noo gane ower yer pow,
Whar ne'er a grey hair daur'd to grow,
And still as stievly on the knowe
Wi' brow sae brent,
Ye cock yer cap and mak yer bow
As fresh as pent.

Nae doot, auld toon, yer sturdy back
In days gane by got mony a rack,
No wi' the burden o' Time's pack,
But want o' care
In "bairns" wha hadna just the knack
To tent ye fair.

Like an auld ship sair tempest toss'd
And aft been maistlins wrecked and lost,
On the wild breakers o' the coast,
Or treacherous bar—
That left its fierce grup as it cross'd
In mony a scar.

Ye've sailed through mony changing years,
Larden wi' countless hopes and fears,
Wi' blinks o' sunshine-smiles and tears;
And ye've had mair
O' Fortune's cankered kicks and jeers
Than was yer share.

But time aye brocht a kindly sa'
That killed the canker o' them a',
An' noo there's no a speck or flaw
In a' yer skin;
I'm blythe—wha's no?—to see sae braw
Their nearest kin.

A' through the year that's gliding fast
Into the portals o' the past
Stootly ye've battled wi' ilk blast
And bravely bore,
Yer watchword flaunting frae the mast—
Excelsior.

Sma' wonder that ye deftly steer,
And frae the richt track never veer,
For ANE who tents your rinning gear
Is at his post,
And marks ilk shallow, rock, and wear
That girds the coast.

A skipper whom we dearly lo'e,
Warm of heart and leal and true,
Staunch of purpose through and through
To richten wrangs,
Backed by a sturdy, fearless crew
Whare'er he gangs.

Up wi' your voices chauntingly,
Display your colours flauntingly,
Join in the chorus rantingly,
Wi' micht and main,
And let the warl ken rantingly
Our Ne'er-day strain.

Stowed firmly a' in freenship's barge,
Engirt wi' joys, swurd, and targe,
We'll send wi' reaming bumpers large
The auld toasts roun',
First prime, my lads, and glorious charge
To Fa'kirk toun.

May every blessing round her smile,
And linger near her hallans—while
The flowers shall spring to deck the soil
Wi' beauty rare,
And fortune pour in hames o' toil
A bounteous share.

To Tam, OOR Tam,* the gude and kind,
And genial Wullie† o' the Wynd,
And Mungalheid,‡ o' kindred mind,
And dainty Pate,§
Wi' San‖ and Charlie¶ ne'er behind
Nor oot o' date.

To him the chief o' Mayfield's ** hame,
Wham Fa'kirk aye shall proodly claim,
And brag abroad his honoured name—
That every "bairn"
May frae his weel-won lasting fame
A lesson learn.

Amang sic hearts may wisdom bide,
And o'er their councils aye preside,

* Provost Thomas Kier. † William Wyse, baker. ‡ William Morrison, farmer, Mungalhead. § Peter Carmichael, draper. ‖ Alexander Adam, tanner. ¶ Charles Somerville, confectioner. These gentlemen were members of the Falkirk Town Council at this date

** John Russel of Mayfield, afterwards Provost of Falkirk.

And gie them wut to tend and guide
The guid auld toon ;
And err—but on the safest side,
The hale year roun'.

To every loyal, sturdy "bairn"
That saws the wood or hammers airn,
Or bigs the gracefu', stately cairn,
We'll pledge success ;
May cause ne'er come to make them yearn,
Or gie them less.

To ilka freen—whare'er they be—
In foreign land, on roaring sea,
Dear to you and dear to me
Are ane an' a'.
Remember them richt royally,
Though far awa'.

But sixty-five is at the door,
And eagerly would join the splore,
Sae fill the parting deuchan dor,
And bring him in—
While we gar roof and rafters roar
Wi' gleesome din.

A gude New Year ! A gude New Year !
May Fa'kirk aye to glory steer,
Her "bairns" hard pressing in the rear,
Noo tak' a blaw ;
Syne ance, twice, thrice—mak' deaf lugs hear—
Hip ! hip, hurrah.

THE CURLER'S LAMENT.

Published in the *Falkirk Herald* for January 26th, 1865, and signed "Ivanhoe," Grangemouth. Afterwards issued on single slips and signed "R.B."

Wae's me, but this beats a'!
The Winter's come an' gane,
And ne'er a cowe's been ower a pow
To soop a rink or stane—
To soop a rink or stane
On ice-clad pond or dam;
And ne'er a spiel's been played atweel,
Save ower some neebor dram.

Frae oot the blustering North
Wild blasts o' win' an' rain
Drive roaring sooth; but sma's the drooth,
Till back they come again,
And pour down ten times waur;
While East and Wast chime in
Wi' pick an' wale o' snaw and hail,
To spoil baith horn and spune.

When a' is snell and clear,
And starnies shining bricht,
I tarry true the lang nicht through
To see that a's gaun richt.
And houp thuds at my breist,
And lichts my sleepless e'e—
But when the daw' steals John awa'
I'd maist fecht wi' a flea!

'Tis jist twa weeks sin' syne
  Oor pond was frozen ower,
And mettle shanks trudged roun' its banks
  Wi' mony a greedy glower:
When peugh! a wastlin soogh
  Garr'd a' oor faples fa';
And though we tried oor grief to hide,
  Soor plooms gaed roun' us a'.

There's Willie, canny man,
  Ne'er deavesome wi' his din,
But no' a wean he ca's his ain
  Daur cheep noo when he's in;
While's wrangling wi' the wife,
  Regairdless o' her wiles,
But gie him frost, he's at his post
  Wi' face a' smirks an' smiles.

The auld laird yaumerin' herps,
  Wi' muckle trith, I fear—
A's gaun to wreck; and grand Carsebreck
  'Ill no' be grand the year
Wi' Scotia's sturdy sons,
  In Scotia's grand auld geme,
Nae south gan's north, across the Forth,
  For honour's diadem.

A' curlers true and keen,
  Wi' lamentations gang,
And hing their heids, as gin their deeds
  Unholy were and wrang;
Or at the ingle en'
  They dream, wi' dreary sigh,
O' roaring fun, and victories won
  In glorious days gane by.

O weary fa' the rain,
  And weary fa' the win',
When we gan' oot to speer aboot,
  We're drookit to the skin.
Wae's me, it clean beats a'!
  The winter's come and gane,
An' ne'er a cowe's been ower a pow
  To soop a rink or stane.

NEIL DOUGLAS.

Neil Douglas was a young man of great promise, who lost his life by drowning in the canal, February 21st, 1865. The following verses, written by Buchanan, were published in the *Falkirk Herald*, March 2nd, 1865.

Breaks the bright morn, and shadows flee away,
  Sings the quaint streams through dingle, dell, and wood,
Up springeth flowers to grace the glorious day,
  And trees put forth their blossoms life renewed.
For ever and for ever time rolls on,
  Waking to life upon its rock-bound shore
Creation's gems, but ah! the soul once gone
  From out its earthly seat returns no more.
And from amongst us, ere Youth's fickle spring
  Had merg'd in manhood, one had pass'd away
Whose kindly thoughts and deeds we may not sing,
  Will live through time as but of yesterday.
Sleep on, poor Neil, until the last loud knell
  Shall summon thee and all men—Fare-ye-well.

THE GRANGEMOUTH VOLUNTEERS.

On March 19th, 1865, the officers of the 1st Stirlingshire Artillery Volunteers entertained the honorary and regular members of the corps to supper in Mr. Wallace's Zetland Arms Hotel, Grangemouth. The toast of "The Gunners of the 1st Stirlingshire" was coupled with the name of the poet, who was one of their number. Replying briefly, he afterwards sang the song given below, amid great laughter and applause.

Come sing the glorious victories won
 Of yore, by land and sea,
The gallant deeds of valour done
 By Scotia's sons, the free.
But here's a nobler roundelay,
 Which all delighted hears—
'Tis the name, and the fame, and the dauntless game
 Of the Grangemouth Volunteers.

Once on a time, 'mid war's alarms,
 Nap Hectoring, o'er the way,
For Waterloo resolved to make
 Old England reckoning pay;
But ere his precious schemes were formed,
 A glorious host appears—
And firm in the van of the mighty clan
 Were the Grangemouth Volunteers.

Led on by the real Mackay* they came
 To fight the good old cause,
To uphold the honour of the land,
 Our liberty and laws.
Each heart with patriotism burns,
 Unknown were craven fears;
Defence and right were the beacons bright
 Of the Grangemouth Volunteers.

* The late ex-Provost J. S. Mackay, Grangemouth.

Then from the ranks a champion * sprung,
  And 'fore bright beaming eyes,
He twice on Edina's storied plains
  Bore deftly off the prize.
And on the banks of winding Forth,
  Amid loud echo'd cheers,
He won in a run the cutty gun
  From the Grangemouth Volunteers.

At Stirling, where in days of yore
  Our fathers fought and fell,
In the mimic fray of a summer's day
  An Allan† bore the bell.
For trophies four the doughty corps
  Outrivalled all compeers—
First, second, and third came home
  With the Grangemouth Volunteers. (By my word !)

Through battles fought not with the sword,
  Still holds the gallant corps:
Mackay and Thomson ‡ in the van
  Their word "Excelsior."
While loudly ever and anon
  We charm the old poet's ears
With a touch of fun from the Geordie gun §
  Of the Grangemouth Volunteers.

Then drink to the corps and the real Mackay,
  To Thomson and to Gault, ||
For they're the boys if a foe were near
  Would never cry a halt;

* Ex-Provost Mackay, Grangemouth.

† The late Mr. Allan, stationer, Grangemouth.

‡ The late Mr. Thomson, Carronflats.

§ A gun made of wood, and designed by Mr. George Adamson, then gunner of the corps, for hall drill.

|| Lieutenant of the corps, and then agent for Carron Company at Grangemouth. He died abroad.

But load and prime, ye heroes fire,
  They'd thunder 'mid our cheers,
For "do or dee!" is the battle cry
  Of the Grangemouth Volunteers.

GRANGEMOUTH GLORIES—No. III.

The Dinner to Mr. A. Thomson, Ochilview.

To mark the occasion of his leaving Newton Mains Farm and settling at Ochilview, Grangemouth, Mr. Alexander Thomson was entertained to a public dinner at Grangemouth on November 24th, 1865. The following poem, written on that event, appeared in the *Falkirk Herald*, of December 5th, 1865.

Grand Introduction.

Slap, bang! here we are again;
  Here we are again so jolly—
In friendship's armour ready charged
  For a royal slap bang volley!
To the honour and fame of a dear loved name,
  Whose praises still are ringing
Over valley and lea, over mountain and sea,
  In a whirlwind of singing,

Brilliantly the festooned lights were blazing in the hall,
And gorgeous danced the shadows on the gold bespangled wall,
Where a hundred loyal hearts had met responsive to the call
Of friendship, and to welcome back the dearly loved of all.

High from the alcove gallery sweet music poured its strains,
And roused the festive spirit up with joy-gilded reins;
Oblivion hid young worldly cares, and eke all olden pains,
And charmed to her blissful shrine their losses and their gains.

But, hark! the doors crash open wide, and eager fancies fan
The genial wish that upwards springs as now the march began,
With classic Grange's Baron* bold, stout leading on the van,
While "See the conquering hero comes," in thrilling numbers ran.

The vaulted roof rang out again the thunder of the cheers
That greets the evening's honoured guest as nobly he appears,
Surrounded by a brilliant staff of glorious compeers—
Staunch guardians of the grand old flag that's braved a thousand years.

Amid the host of gallant hearts, old Falkirk's Chief† was there,
With the Squires of Wholeflats ‡ and Newhouse, § both claiming equal share
To do the honours of the night; with the Baron in the chair,
And on whose crest we'll henceforth write in letter'd gold, "I dare."

Now seated round the festive board, with bent and crowded sail,
Subdued and hushed with courses shaped, they're at it "tooth and nail,"
Excuse that vulgar saying, please, for poesy doth fail;
On mastication scenes like these she fairly turns her tail.

'Tis past; the feast magnificent has gone like other things,
With little cavilling, "Mr. Welsh," about the legs or wings.
And thanks, of course, goes round and round, while, from the alcove, springs
A regular burst, that o'er the hall like muffled thunder rings.

* The late Henry Baird of Abbots Grange.
† Provost Thomas Kier.
‡ William Walker of Wholeflats.
§ The late William Marshall of Newhouse.

Hurrah! and yet again hurrah! the Baron's on his feet,
Subduing Age's quickening thoughts, and Youth's imperious heat.
By Jove! he's gone and done it—aye, and done it pretty neat,
And thundering cheers from every side his polished periods greet.

Fill, boys, and pledge his glorious toast to him who doth not know,
In all this wide and wicked world the semblance of a foe;
Who, by his deeds of every day, can stand upright and show
How life to all men, can be made an Eden here below.

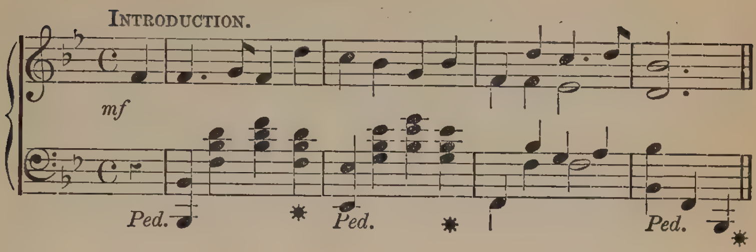
A genial look, a courteous smile, a kindly word let fall—
A heart as open as the day to pity's melting call,
Are charms to win the great's esteem, the affection of the small—
And lo! the Chief of Ochilview he doth possess them all.

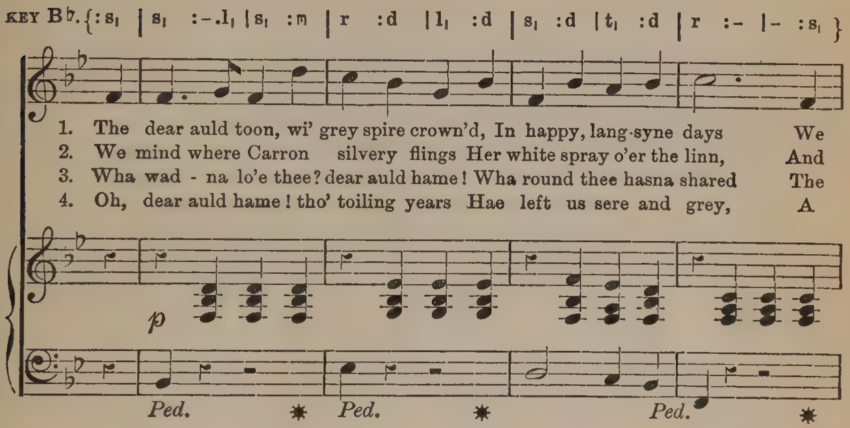
Then fill and drink, with nine times nine, to him and all his sort.
And may their names for ever live in time's defying fort;
For are not they the beacons bright, we steer by, are, in short,
The honour of old Scotland and the glory of our port!

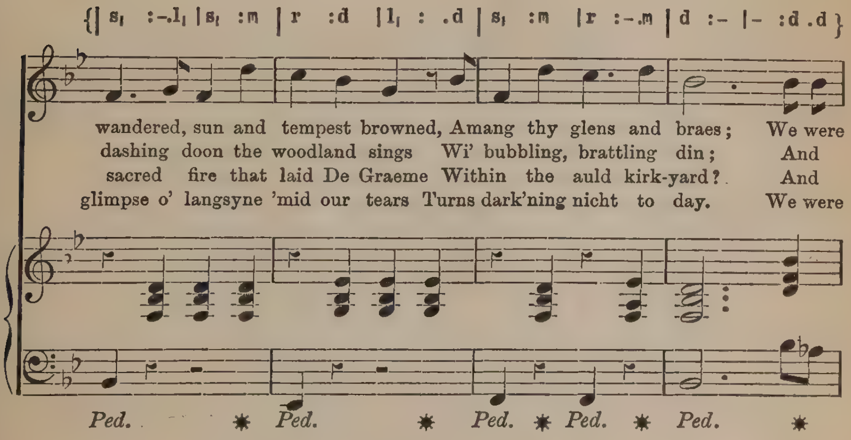
GRANGEMOUTH, 1st Dec., 1865. IVANHOE.

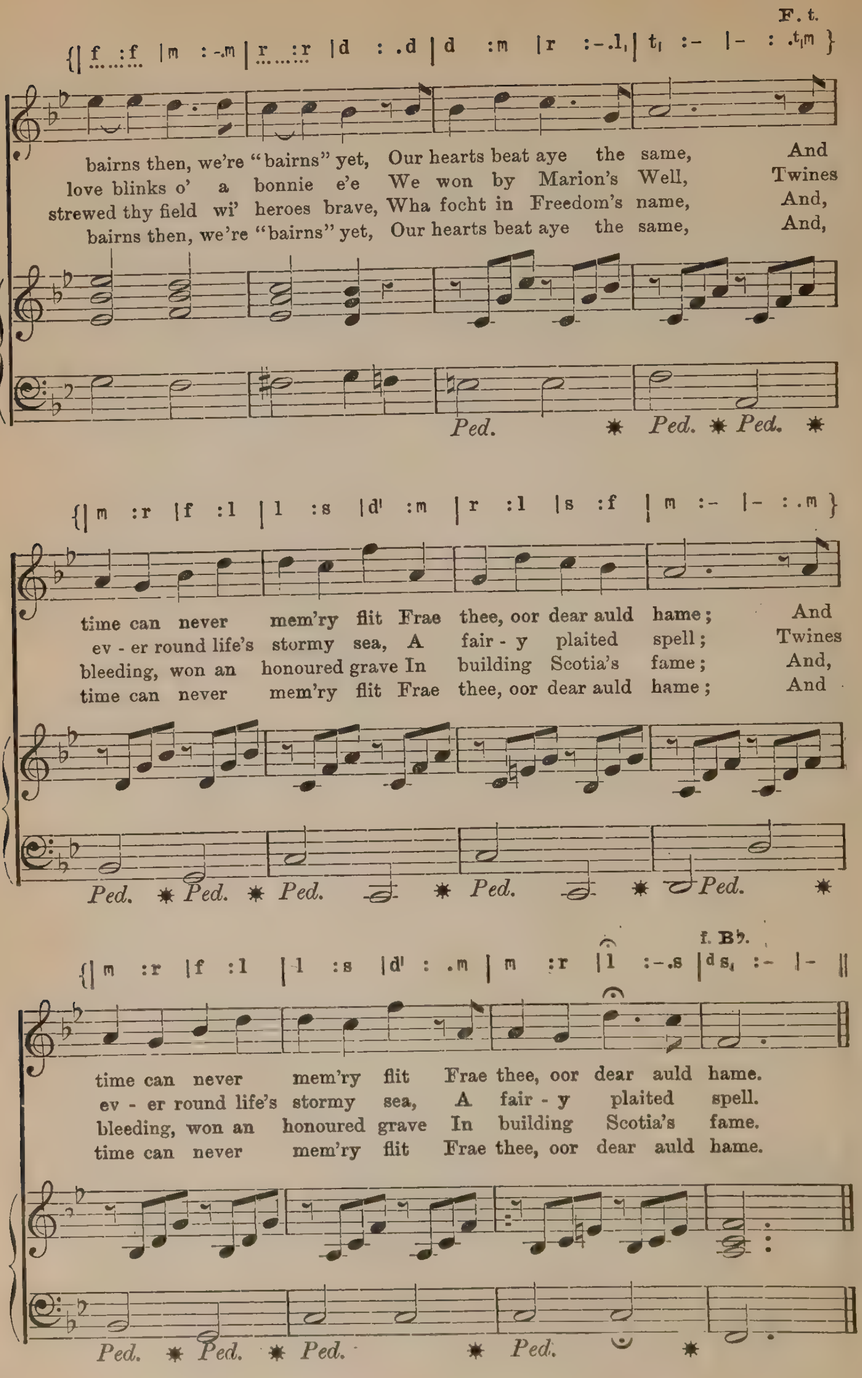
The Dear Auld Hame.

(FALKIRK TOWN.)

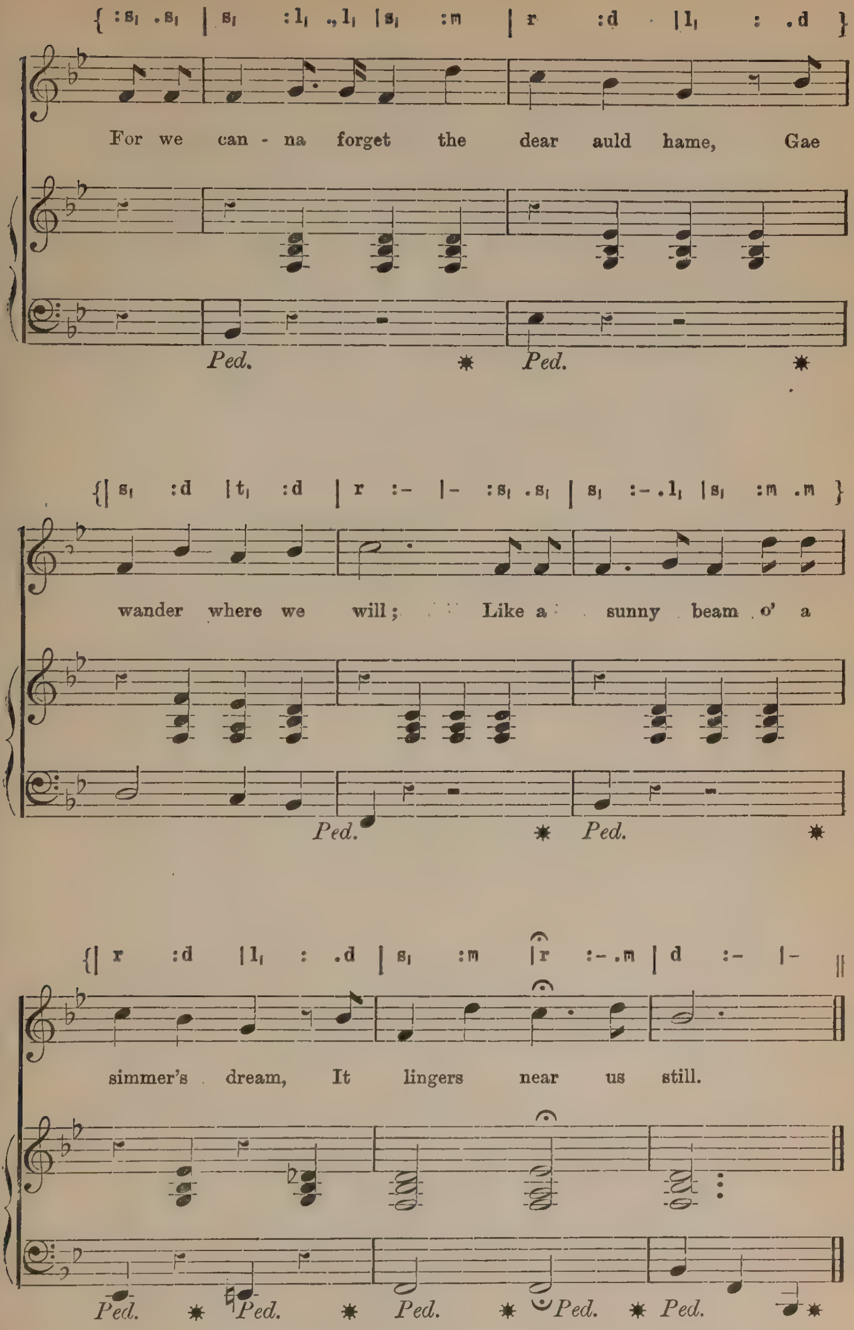


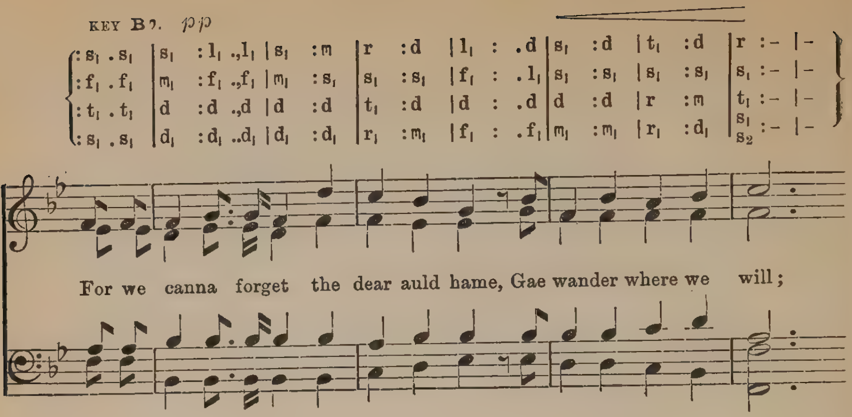


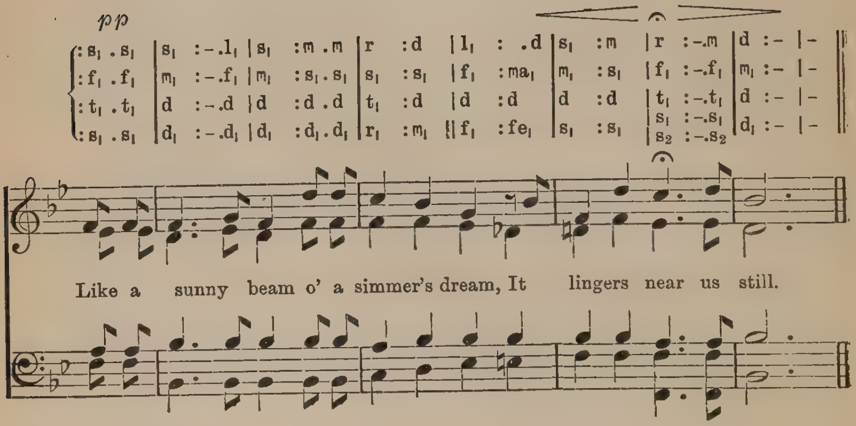



F. t.
bairns then, we're "bairns" yet, Our hearts beat aye the same, And
love blinks o' a bonnie e'e We won by Marion's Well, Twines
strewed thy field wi' heroes brave, Wha focht in Freedom's name, And,
bairns then, we're "bairns" yet, Our hearts beat aye the same, And,
time can never mem'ry flit Frae thee, oor dear auld hame; And
ev - er round life's stormy sea, A fair - y plaited spell; Twines
bleeding, won an honoured grave In building Scotia's fame; And,
time can never mem'ry flit Frae thee, oor dear auld hame; And
f. B♭.
time can never mem'ry flit Frae thee, oor dear auld hame.
ev - er round life's stormy sea, A fair - y plaited spell.
bleeding, won an honoured grave In building Scotia's fame.
time can never mem'ry flit Frae thee, oor dear auld hame.

Chorus.*


For we can - na forget the dear auld hame, Gae
wander where we will; Like a sunny beam o' a
simmer's dream, It lingers near us still.





* *If thought desirable the harmonised version of the Chorus may be sung by a select number of voices.*

SONG—THE DEAR AULD HAME.

It is by this song that the poet will best be remembered. Its origin may be briefly told. In 1865 the "Bairns" of Falkirk resident in Glasgow resolved to have a re-union in the Trades Hall there on January 26th, 1866. One evening, at the close of the year 1865, the poet was in company with Mr. William Scott, then editor of the *Falkirk Herald*, and Mr. Robert Barr, now of Arnotdale. The conversation of the three friends turned on the subject of the forthcoming Falkirk re-union. "You must write a song for the occasion," said Mr. Barr to the poet, but the latter fought shy of the subject, and for the moment nothing farther was said regarding it. Ere the evening had passed, however, Mr. Barr had received Buchanan's promise that he would write a song, on condition that he (Mr. Barr) would attend the re-union in Glasgow, and hear it sung. Needless to say this condition was at once agreed to, and a few days later "The Dear Auld Hame" was produced. The Falkirk Choral Union, which had been formed in 1865, was conducted by Mr. John Fulcher, of Glasgow, and an appeal being made to him to give the words a musical setting, he did so, with, we consider, the happiest results. The principal local vocalist at this period was Mr. Michael Rennie, leader of psalmody in the West United Presbyterian Church, and to him was entrusted the honour of singing the song at the Falkirk re-union. From the press of the time we learn that the song was warmly applauded by the large number of "bairns" assembled. In March of the same year it was sung by Mr. Rennie at an amateur concert given by the Falkirk Volunteers, and also in the month of April following, at the first concert given by the Choral Union, and which was conducted by Mr. Fulcher. The Falkirk Iron Works Band—then in the zenith of its fame—had the melody arranged by Bandmaster Booth, and at most of their public appearances the song was played, while at all convivial gatherings held in "the dear auld toon," the song was sure to be sung by some member of the company. To the writer's knowledge the song has—until lately—been but rarely heard in our midst for the last quarter of a century. This is easily accounted for. A new generation has sprung up who only heard the song spoken of, and however much they may have desired to become familiar with it, they could not gratify that desire, as the words and music were never published. In November, 1897, however, Messrs. Parlane, of Paisley, included the song in their National Choir (No. 120), arranged as a part-song by our townsman Mr. Robert Dunn. Additional interest was shown in the song when in January, 1899, Mr. Durward Lely, the

great Scottish vocalist, included it in his programme at Mr. Love's concert. The song has also been given on other important occasions of late. But few who were present at the unveiling of the poet's monument are likely to forget the effect produced when it was sung over his grave; the oft-recurring refrain, "For we canna forget the dear auld hame," sung in the most subdued manner, touched the hearts of all who braved the elements on that stormy September afternoon. The song has been introduced into the higher standards of our Board Schools, and in this way we trust it will become more widely known than ever, and sung wherever the "bairns" o' Fa'kirk do congregate.

THE COMPOSER OF THE MELODY.

While the words of "The Dear Auld Hame" are of such a character as must merit appreciation from all loyal "bairns" of Falkirk, it must not be forgotten that they owe something of their popularity to the exquisite melody which is wedded to them; therefore, a word or two seems due to the memory of the musician who composed it.

Many can recall the familiar figure of Mr. John Fulcher, whose profession of music teacher brought him to our town weekly to instruct privately, and also to conduct the Falkirk Choral Union. A genial soul such as one rarely meets, Mr. Fulcher was a great favourite in musical and other circles. Born in London, August 18th, 1830, he studied music under W. Meyer Lutz and Alfred Mullin. In 1855 he settled as a music teacher in Glasgow, and made for himself an excellent practice. From 1868 to 1879 he acted as choirmaster at Glasgow Cathedral, resigning in the latter year on an organ being introduced. Mr. Fulcher also held appointments as music-master to the Athenæum and the Blind Asylum. His compositions show a fine vein of melody, and as a harmonizer of Scottish songs he had few equals. About 1870 he edited "The Lays and Lyrics of Scotland," the music arrangements displaying good taste on Mr. Fulcher's part. Of his compositions the best known is certainly the song, "Where has Scotland found her fame?" Mr. Fulcher died at Glasgow, July 10th, 1893. One of his sons, Mr. Henry Macleod Fulcher, is an organist and composer of much ability.

The dear auld toon, wi' grey spire crown'd;
  In happy langsyne days,
We wandered, sun and tempest browned,
  Amang thy glens and braes;

We were bairns then, we're "bairns" yet,
  Our hearts beat aye the same,
And time can never mem'ry flit
  Frae thee, oor dear auld hame;
And time can never mem'ry flit
  Frae thee, oor dear auld hame.

CHORUS—

For we canna forget the dear auld hame,
  Gae wander where we will;
Like the sunny beam o' a simmer's dream
  That lingers near us still.

We mind where Carron silvery flings
  Her white spray o'er the linn,
And dashing doon the woodland sings,
  Wi' bubbling, brattling din;
And love blinks o' a bonnie e'e
  We won by Marion's Well,
Twines ever round life's stormy sea,
  A fairy plaited spell;
Twines ever round life's stormy sea,
  A fairy plaited spell.

CHORUS—For we canna forget, etc.

Wha wadna lo'e thee? dear auld hame!
  Wha round thee hasna shared
The sacred fire that laid De Græme
  Within the auld kirkyaird?
And strewed thy field wi' heroes brave,
  Wha focht in Freedom's name,
And, bleeding, won an honoured grave
  In building Scotia's fame;
And, bleeding, won an honoured grave
  In building Scotia's fame.

CHORUS—For we canna forget etc.

Oh, dear auld hame! tho' toiling years
  Hae left us sere and grey,
A glimpse o' langsyne 'mid our tears
  Turns dark'ning nicht to day.
We were bairns then, we're "bairns" yet,
  Our hearts beat aye the same,
And time can never mem'ry flit
  Frae thee, oor dear auld hame;
And time can never mem'ry flit
  Frae thee, oor dear auld hame.

Chorus—For we canna forget, etc.

SONG—A MESSAGE FROM THE DEEP.

This song appeared in the *Falkirk Herald* for January 2nd, 1866.

It was afterwards set to music (specially for Mr. J. G. Patey the eminent basso, and husband of Madame Patey, the famed contralto vocalist) by Mr. Emile Berger, a musician well known in Falkirk forty years ago, as an excellent pianoforte accompanist, and who died in 1900. It does not seem to have been published before 1870, as the copy received at the British Museum bears that date. It was first sung in Falkirk by Mr Patey on November 29th, 1866, at one of Mr. Michael Rennie's concerts. The late Signor Foli, the eminent basso, also included it in his repertoire, and local vocalists might do likewise. The publishers are Messrs. E. Aschenberg & Co., musicsellers, 46 Berners Street, London, W.

No ship came home from the isles afar,
  No whisperings of her doom
Came home to the land where hope's lone star
  Had set in the deepening gloom;
And a mother's tears fell sad and fast,
  A maiden, so fair and young,

Grew thin and pale, as the moaning blast
  For the loved one wildly sung.
      Fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well!
      My Mary dear, farewell;
      The moaning blast it wildly sung
      Farewell, my love, farewell.

The weary months and the years passed by
  On the silent, sailing stream,
And the mem'ry of the homeward bound
  Wax'd dim as a dying dream.
Till lo! in the light of a summer sun
  Wash'd up on a pebbly shore,
A dead hand told of a life's race run,
  Of a heart that sighs no more.
      Fare-thee-well, etc.

On board the doom'd ship, "Dawn of Light,"
  Engulfed by the raging sea,
Our foremast gone in the blackness of night,
  And the breakers on our lee;
She has struck! oh, hark! that dreadful sound
  Proclaims the mariner's knell!
Father, to Thee we're homeward bound,
  Mother, Mary, friends, farewell.
      Fare-thee-well, fare-thee-well!
      My own true love, farewell;
      Tho' on earth we part, we yet may meet
      In heaven, my love, farewell!

SONG—THE SAILOR'S BRIDE.

Published in the *Falkirk Herald,* February 24th, 1866.

From the golden isles with white sails spread
O'er a broad and sunlit sea,
Like a snow-plumed bird the good ship sped
With the ripple on her lee.
Lightly she kissed the silvery foam
As she dashed the waves aside,
And Tom sung cheerily of his home
And Mary his fair young bride.

The day went down in a cloud of fire,
And the Storm King rode the gale,
The lightning's flash and the thunder's ire
Made many a stout heart quail.
But yet the good ship bravely fought
Through the surging waters wide,
And poor Tom sighed as he sadly thought
Of home and his fair young bride.

A shatter'd wreck in the daylight's glare
On a rock-bound sea coast lay,
And a struggling form in wild despair
Sought landward a hopeless way.
See! an eager hand has grasped to save,
But the fierce receding tide
Sweeps back again to a sailor's grave
Poor Tom and his fair young bride

R. B.

FALKIRK FACTS.

No. 8—Grand Masonic Ball in Corn Exchange, March 2nd, 1866.

For a quarter of a century enthusiasm for matters Masonic in Falkirk was at the lowest ebb. In November, 1863, however, strenuous efforts were made to bring about the resuscitation of the old Falkirk Lodge, efforts which were eminently successful, and about the close of the year 1864 the first regular nomination of office-bearers took place. After the Lodge had been firmly established, a ball was held on March 2nd, 1866, and passed off with the greatest *éclat*, being the first Masonic ball held in Falkirk for some thirty years. As a member of Lodge Zetland (391), the poet was present, and a few days later sent the following poem to the *Falkirk Herald*, in which he graphically describes the scene and several incidents of the evening.

Sound the loud timbrel and thunder the gong,
Break forth, willing hearts, in a tumult of song,
For the wand of Macfarlane,* right wielded once more,
Hath brought back old 16 her glory of yore.

Hurrah for the craft, whose bright banner unfurled
Encompasseth oceans and lands of the world,
Whose emblems are love and truth, deep and sincere,
Whose creeds kings and senates delight to revere.

All-powerful it breathes in the pure light divine,
High and low, rich and poor, kneeling proud at its shrine,
Towering ever unsullied on age after age,
Adorning with gold tints immortal fame's page.

. . . .

The lights blazed in the festive hall,
  The guests came pouring in—
Some handsome—so and-so—and tall,
  Short, squat, and thick, and thin.

* Brother David Macfarlane of Thornhill, R.W.M. of the resuscitated Lodge, and a most enthusiastic member of the "craft."

Of course these were the genus male,
  But tripping oft between
Came fairy courts with crowded sail,
  Though never came a queen.

For Empresses were every one,
  And jewels rich and rare
Paled dim beneath the glorious sun
  Of beauty beaming there.

Soft flowing locks reflecting gold
  With every zephyr's sigh,
And shone forth wealth of mind untold
  From many a flashing eye.

Fair stately heads all diademed
  On necks of purest snow;
Round polished arms that might have gemm'd
  Old Michael's studio.

Enchanting smiles that sweetly played
  Round lips of coral hue,
And scattered death where'er they strayed
  On champions of the blue,

Were there—like flowers on fairy ground,
  Within the spangled hall,
Gracing old Falkirk's "bairns," and crowned
  Their grand Masonic Ball.

O sing not of your Georgian maids,
  Of Andalusia's fair;
Or wild Circassia's silvery braids—
  They never could compare

With Jane or Nancy of the North,
Or Marion of the West,
With Mary on the banks of Forth,
The rarest, fairest, best.

With charming Kate, so richly fair,
With Bessie, lithe and tall,
With—let me see—pshaw, I could swear,
With any at the ball.

But now, goodness gracious! the dance has begun,
And light feet like magic hop one, two, three, one;
Quadrille, waltz, and polka *à la* grand toe and heel,
Followed up fast and furious with the figure eight reel.

Like the sun in the morning 'mid purple and gold,
The broad smile of pleasure doth slowly unfold
On the M.C.'s * physiognomy, and loud is the cry,
Strike up, ye brave minstrels, and never say die.

O glorious! O glorious! O sublime was the view
Of fairy robes mingling with the silver and blue,
And Zetland's deep crimson and gold in the maze
Bewitched, fascinated, and won volumes of praise.

While around 'mid the evergreens which good Darroch † gave,
The flags of all nations majestic doth wave,
And the contrast was beautiful and grand in extreme,
Realising to perfection the poet's grand dream.

From labour refreshing in the tapestried west,
The prowess of Askew ‡ stood bravely the test,
And ne'er for a moment did it falter or wane,
'Mid a deep *el dorado* of beer and champagne.

* Mr. John Inglis, dancing master.

† James Aitken, Esq. of Darroch.

‡ Mr. A. W. Askew, an enthusiastic Mason, proprietor of the Blue Bell Hotel, who provided the refreshments.

But misery, the night fled, and morning came round,
When lo! the brave M.C. was lost and was found,
Strike up, ye brave minstrels, again was the cry,
Make a last exhibition, and adjourn *sine die.*

And thus the minstrels they did play,
We've done our best to please all,
We won't go home till break of day,
Pop goes the weasel.

O, if Stewart,* fiddle-de-gum,
Had brought his famous easel,
He'd sketch the scene, while we would thrum
Pop goes the weasel.

In every hop that's been to-night,
Ye've cut the regular cheese, all,
To play to such is our delight—
Pop goes the weasel.

But greatest pleasure will wear through,
So, boys, gently seize all;
Your lassies kiss, and bid adieu—
Pop goes the weasel.

The lights were out, and carriages
Pranced fair ones swiftly home,
To dream of love and marriages,
Or some such things to come.

And many a dear one on her bed,
Her silken curls and all,
Dreamt over how she featly led
The dancing at the ball.

* Mr. James Stewart, the well-known portrait painter.

And many pondered o'er and o'er,
Who was the fairest belle;
Ah! that's a puzzle, and it's more
Than you or I can tell.

For all were charming, all were fair,
Bright glittering in their sheen;
And only Falkirk's daughters rare
Could form so rich a scene.

A bumper pledge them while we're here,
May they get married all,
And many a little olive rear
For many a Mason's ball.

And pledge again to good "16,"
So old, and yet so young:
Time-honoured! yet as fresh and green
As minstrel ever sung.

Right nobly hath thy sons again
Received their ancient name,
And built for thee a throne to reign
With never dying fame.

Go, spread abroad on lightning wing
Thy mead of light and truth,
And make thy vaulted arches ring
Amid renewing youth;

While we for him that tends thy tread,
No matter who he be,
Will pray that honours o'er his head
Will flourish mightily.

Another yet; come, brothers, fill
To genial, burly Scott,*
Though reft from us, O never will
His fair fame be forgot.

He was a brother true as steel,
Single of heart and mind,
Aye prompt to act, and quick to feel,
He never lagged behind;

But ever in the van he sought
The light that wisdom learns,
And many years, like Cyrus, fought
The battle o' the "bairns."

Then rally round him, every one
Who holds a brother dear,
And give him, now his work is done,
A heart-felt parting cheer.

Who knows but Fortune's fickle wheel
May turn him, pens and all,
Up, hale and weel, to dance a reel
At our next Masonic Ball.

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* Mr. William Scott, editor of the *Falkirk Herald*, who had just accepted an important appointment on the staff of the *Liverpool Courier*.

BONNIE GRANNY,

This poem appeared first in the *Edinburgh Daily Review*, and a few days later in the *Falkirk Herald* of April 24th, 1866.

Bonnie granny, dear auld granny,
Weel I lo'e to sit and gaze
On thy locks, as white as snow-wreaths,
And thy honest cheerfu' face.
Fondest thoughts o' life's sweet morning,
Crowd on crowd, around me flee,
And I dream of joyous boyhood,
When you nursed me on your knee;
When you nursed me on your knee,
And sang, 'twixt ilka kiss and clap,
Hushaba, my bonnie bairnie,
Fa' asleep on granny's lap.

Bonnie granny, dear auld granny,
Be it sunshine, be it shower,
On thy brow there's ne'er a wrinkle,
Naething can your temper sour.
Though your specs I oft have hidden,
O' your clew whiles made a ba',
Wadna move an inch when bidden,
And done my very best to thraw.
Yet you nursed me, etc.

Bonnie granny, dear auld granny,
What aye brought the neebors here?
Just to hear your cantie stories—
Aye sae pithy, wise, and queer,
The very cat gaed purrin' wi' you
When you toddled doon the stair;
While the doggie, hoarse wi' barking,
Like a sentry watched your chair.
When you nursed me, etc.

Bonnie granny, dear auld granny,
When I'm fit to earn a crown,
On the hob I'll keep your teapot,
On your back a bonny gown.
Work awa' then, at your stocking,
Poortith near ye winna bide,
Happy gran'weans, jumping round you,
Make me mind the days wi' pride.
When you nursed me, etc.

Bonnie granny, dear auld granny,
Folks hae grown right gleg and smart;
Though I muckle fear that learning
Doesna aye improve the heart.
Emperors, kings, and dukes hae crumbled—
The country's friends, the country's faes—
And yet you're just as blythe and hearty
As you were in bygone days,
When you nursed me, etc.

Bonnie granny, dear auld granny,
O' your ways I ne'er wad tire;
Pull your plaidie closer round you,
Draw your creepie near the fire.
Bonnie simmer days are coming,
Sweet wee flow'rets soon shall blow,
Then we'll range the fields thegither,
As we did lang, lang ago,
When your nursed me, etc.

DEATH OF MR. JAMES FERGUSON, OF H.M. CUSTOMS, GRANGEMOUTH.

From *Falkirk Herald*, September 6th, 1866.

It is with feelings of unfeigned sorrow and regret that we record to-day the demise, on Saturday evening, of this young and much-esteemed gentleman. Seldom has it been our lot to write an obituary of one who in his own circle was so greatly respected; and if we had a wish at present, it would be that we might be able to depart entirely from the broad path of commonplace and hackneyed sentiment, in order to pay a just and simple tribute to his memory. A few weeks ago, and his death was not among the most remote ideas of his friends. Young, for he was only twenty-two years of age, and, to all appearance, strong, the world was all before him, and it was no extravagant opinion to entertain by those who knew his abilities, that ere he quitted this life, he would leave a mark on it which would not be easily effaced.

Mr. Ferguson entered the Customs here, as second clerk, about two years ago, and during the time he served Her Majesty in that capacity, he succeeded in winning not only the friendship, but the affection of all his brother officers. From the gentlemen in the same office, down to the out-door department, he, by the gentleness of his disposition, his unassuming manners, and never-ending anxiety to serve and please, exacted towards him feelings of the highest regard. His was not the nature that continually searches for the mote. Humble in spirit, he failed to discover the errings of his fellow mortals; and the Divine injunction to love your neighbour never received better obedience than at his hands. About five weeks since he was attacked with severe internal indisposition while on duty in the office, and after an illness borne with meekness and resignation almost wonderful, he quietly succumbed to his malady on Saturday last, and a

purer or more gentle spirit never left earthly tenement. Mr. Ferguson was remarkable as having passed the best competitive examination of his year. Of a maximum number of 1400 marks, he received no less than 1225—the average number obtained by the other candidates throughout the service being rather under than over 1000. As an advanced arithmetician he had few if any equals in the district; and young as he was, he gave promise of being a fluent and able writer. During last winter he frequently contributed to our columns, and a lengthened and well-written review of David Wingate's second volume of poems was from his pen; but "his combat's o'er, his prize is won," and the waves of time will ebb and flow for many a day to come, ere one so richly endowed will fill the place that will know him no more.

Solemn and slow the year is dying down,
  The Summer's spoil in Autumn's lap is spread;
O'er lawn and lea the first reft leaves have flown,
  Fluttering to earth, time-yellowed, sere, and dead.
Ascending songs triumphant overhead,
  Greeting the burnished portals of the day,
Are hushed, and beauteous tints have shed
  Their lingering odours; passing then away,
And with them one, who like an opening flower,
  Blooming before the winter storms take wing,
Falls withered, blasted, ere the golden hour
  Unveils its glory in the flush of Spring.
But yet, why weep? why wring our hearts with pain?
He lived, he died, and endless lives again.

R. B.

THE MINER'S FOE.

This poem, given under the Grangemouth news in the *Falkirk Herald*, of December 12th, 1866, is unsigned, but is the composition of Buchanan. It is founded on an incident which occurred at a terrible colliery explosion at Barnsley, in December, 1866, when 400 lives were lost.

Deep in the earth so dark and damp,
  Far down from the light of day,
By the fitful gleam of a tiny lamp,
  A miner in coal-dust lay.
His manly brow was wet with toil,
  But he knew nor care nor fear,
For he toiled for the wealth of a loved one's smiles,
  And a mother old and dear;
    Softly he sung to each lusty blow,
    And little he dreamt of the miner's foe.

Hark! and his dusty cheek grew pale,
  And quivering came his breath;
For he heard in the long, dull, rushing wail,
  The signal of doom and death.
"Lost!" he cried, as the Fire King swept,
  Like a fiend's destroying frown,
Through the low-brow'd, arching vaults, and leapt
  O'er a hundred heads bowed down;
    And the deep gloom fled in the lurid glow
    That lit up the march of the miner's foe.

Up in the shining morning light,
  They laid him among the rest,
Where a maid, in her love's despairing sight,
  His form to her bosom pressed.
"He wakes! He lives! See, mother, dear!"
  The triumph of death is o'er;

And a weary sigh, and a trembling tear,
  Bore the joys of saved once more.
    Oh, never again will he tempt below,
    The deadly breath of the miner's foe.

CURLING SONG—SOOP! SOOP!

AIR—"Slap Bang."

This curling song was published in the *Falkirk Herald*, March 2nd, 1867. It was composed for, and sung at the annual supper of, the Grangemouth Junior Curling Club. A number of the club members, armed with brooms, joined in the chorus, and illustrated the roaring game with as much ardour as if in reality it was the deciding end for a beef and greens dinner or a Caledonian medal.

Hurrah for the hoary wintry King,
  And his whirling wreaths o' snaw;
Wha wi' a flaff o' his frosty wing
  Puts new life in us a'.
Arouse, ye jolly Junior boys,
The day is choice for curling joys—
Arouse, ye jolly Junior boys,
  Let's to the Loch awa'.
Dinna claw yer heids and think,
Ye wha hasna slept a wink—
Mak' the rings and soop the rink,
  This day we'll do or dee—e—e.

CHORUS.

Soop! soop! soop her ower the houg!
Soop her ower the houg, soop her ower the houg,
Soop! soop! soop her ower the houg—
  Haud up! she's at the tee!

Noo, cautious lad, d'ye see my cowe ?
  This stane has fled the tee—
Weel, hirsel cannie up the howe,
  And haud her straucht for me.
Be watchfu' men, attend her O,
Attend her O, attend her O ;
A cowe will maybe mend her O—
  She's aff the ice awee.
Haud up, haud up, she's on the weke,
And through the bosom o' the breek
The winner gang as clean's a leek,
  We'll coont noo yin, twa, three—e—e.

Soop, soop.

A gaird, a gaird, a guinea bricht,
  A guinea bricht for a gaird ;
O, lad, be shair and haud her ticht,
  Weel done ! that's finely flaired.
She's creeping up fu' bonnie O,
Sae bonnie O, sae bonnie O,
Ye're the grandest curler, Johnnie, O,
  That e'er the warld did see.
O soop, my men, wi' a' yer power,
Gudesake, dinna stan' and glower,
A yaird ! a fit ! eh ! yes ; she's ower,
  And the winner they'll ne'er see—e—e

Soop, soop.

We're lying shot, but yet, my man,
  I dinna like ava
This stane ; sae, jist to spoil their plan
  Rin't oot, and we'll hae twa.
Be lively, lad, and merry O,
Sae merry O, sae merry O ;
Be sharp, my lad, and merry O,
  And yerk it to the snaw.

She's on—ha ! ha ! the trick is done,
She travels oot, as shair's a gun ;—
Crack ! crack !—hurrah, the medal's won,
And happy boys are we—e—e.

Soop, soop.

Doon in the wast the jolly sun
Has gaen wi' a lowing e'e,
And far aboon the siller moon
Is glintin' bonnilee ;
While round the table happy, O,
Sae happy O, sae happy O,
We send aboot the drappie, O,
O' gude auld barley bree ;
And wish ilk curler in the land,
Fill and fetch mair at comman',
As lang's they're fit to creep or stan',
And roar aboot the tee—e—e.

Soop, soop.

IN MEMORIAM.

JAMES LAW: Died January 12th, 1869.

This "In Memoriam" was penned by Buchanan on hearing of the death of his friend Mr. James Law, builder, one of Falkirk's most respected citizens. The sad event, which was mourned by a wide circle, took place at Western Avenue, Grahamston, on January 12th, 1869, and the lines given below were published in the *Falkirk Herald* of January 30th. "Mr. Law was no ordinary individual—he was more than a mere country mason. Possessed of an intellect, perhaps not inferior to that of many who have acquired something like national fame, he had a passionate love for literature, especially that of Scotland, and his hand, hard with honest toil, was not altogether unaccustomed to wield the poet's pen." It will be observed that the first stanza of the "In Memoriam" is part of "An Appeal to the 'Bairns' of Falkirk for Garibaldi and Freedom."

Oh, where is he who erst in lofty strains,
  That made us sad, rejoice, and weep in turns,
Threw deathless lustre o'er the cold remains
  Of Scotland's bard, immortal Robert Burns?
Who, in his heart of hearts, for ever mourns
  The heavy-laden of whatever shore,
Whose manly pride dark despotism spurns,
  Exults in freedom and the battle's roar,
  Where Scotia's sons victorious colours bore.

Falkirk Herald (Old Series).

Fill the earth in softly; softly strew the grave with flow'rets fair;
A manly heart in Death's embrace is soundly sleeping there;
A loving heart, a gentle heart, which beats, alas! no more,
Has crossed the stormy sea of Time, and stranded on its shore.

Through blinding mists, in bygone years, of sunshine and of storm,
I see this heart of truest ring in youth's majestic form;
The oak that scorn'd the winter gale upon the mountain side
Was not more noble at the core, more dauntless in its pride.

Up through the world with girded loins he bravely cleft his way,
Till manhood's goal was reached, and lo! triumphant was his sway;
Life's golden gifts upon him shower'd, nor made his labours vain,
He won a name by skill of hand, and fame by skill of brain.

No sycophant or worshipper of wealth's approving smile
Was he, this child of sterling worth, whose birthright was of toil;
True dignity upon his brow waxed brilliant as a flame,
And shed a wide and lustrous glow on all who round him came.

And when in life's autumnal vale the fickle goddess fled,
Nor faltering was his heart of fire, nor quailing bowed his head;
What cared he for the wealth of earth, the ally of the strong?
His hidden treasure was unveiled, a mine of glorious song.

In new-born joy he walked abroad with weird emotions moved,
Communing with the wondrous works God fashioned and approv'd;
The mystery of the Master hand to dull perception sealed,
Was in a flood of light upon his soul revealed.

Ope'd then the fountain and gushed forth, when meek-eyed
summer reigned,
Long ripened gems of poesy, and song notes unrestrained;
The shady glens, the moorlands wild, the flowers of richest
hue,
Were draped, as with a magic touch, in fairy robes anew.

And when the storms of winter raved, and deep in snow
the hill,
He folded nature in his heart, and sang her beauties still;
The meanest of created things within his kingly thrall
Were pictured forth from promptings deep that saw and
lov'd them all.

But dim's the eye that ling'ring gazed towards the setting
sun—
His weary head is laid at rest, his pilgrimage is done;
And we may weep and oft recall his mem'ry as we mourn,
But, ah! the life-light of his soul can never more return.

Fill his grave then softly, softly strew the turf with flow'rets
fair;
A manly heart, in death's embrace, is soundly sleeping there;
A loving heart, a gentle heart, which beats, alas! no more,
Has crossed the stormy sea of Time, and stranded on its shore.

DUBLIN. R. B.

HYMN—BUILD WE A TEMPLE TO THE LORD.

This is one of a number of sacred pieces written by Buchanan while resident in Ireland. At the opening of the new United Presbyterian Church, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, on Sabbath morning, April 4th, 1869, "Build we a Temple to the Lord," written for the occasion, was sung by a highly-trained choir conducted by Mr. Arthur Barnwell, the clergyman who officiated being the Rev. Professor John Eadie, D.D., of Glasgow. The first pastor of Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, was the Rev. James Stevenson, formerly of Dennyloanhead, now (1901) of Leith.

Build we a temple to the Lord,
Gather together in His name,
All ends of earth with one accord
Sing glory, honour, and acclaim,
To the great King,
Whose praises ring
From sea to sky, on earth, in heaven;
And bow the knee,
While cheerfully
This meed of love to God is given.

Rejoice, rejoice, till arch and tower
Ring back the echoes of our song,
And bless Jehovah, by whose power
We strive to swell the heavenly throng;
Thine aid we sought,
Our offerings brought
And humbly laid them at Thy shrine;
And not in vain,
Great is our gain,
The glory, Lord of Hosts, be Thine.

Lord, hear our grateful prayers, and send
The pastor of Thy temple here
Abundance of good gifts, to tend
A loving people in Thy fear;
And lead them on
Towards the throng,
Where Jesus, smiling, list'ning, stands;
Death's terror past,
Home, home at last
In God's own house not made with hands.

UNFURL THE BANNER OF THE LORD.

The original of this, in Buchanan's handwriting, is in the possession of Mrs. Neil, Grangemouth. Like "Build we a Temple to the Lord," and "Sing the Glory of Jehovah," on the following page, it appears to have been written on the completion of the church in Lower Abbey Street, though not sung at the opening, so far as we can gather.

Unfurl the banner of the Lord,
And gird we for the fight,
Unsheath the sharp edge of His word,
And marshal in His might;
Soldiers of the Cross! appear
O'er God's dominions wide,
His cause prevails, so banish fear—
"The Lord is on our side."
The Lord is on our side,
Our King, our Chief, and Guide;
With heart, and soul, and voice,
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice.

Unfurl His banner, fling abroad
His glory o'er the wall
Of this our Zion rear'd to God,
Rear'd ne'er to sway or fall,
Till death and sin are whirled down
In life's ne'er-ebbing tide,
Then we shall wear the promised crown,
The Lord upon our side.
The Lord upon our side,
While endless ages glide;
With heart, and soul, and voice,
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice.

SING THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH.

Sing the glory of Jehovah,
Peal the bells from spire and tower;
Hallelujah! hallelujah!
To His majesty and power.

Lift your voices, swell the chorus,
Till resounds the vaulted fane,
And responsive songs of angels
Intermingle with the strain.

Ask ye why these signs of gladness?
Hearken to the wondrous tale,
Which, like healing balm, has scattered
Sunlight o'er life's tearful vale.

Faint and weary, wandering blindly,
Strangers in a stranger land,
Jesus, ever gracious, found us,
Proffer'd us a helping hand.

Led us onward, hope inspiring,
  Gathered us within one fold,
And upon the Cross's banner
  Carved our names in letter'd gold.

Set a faithful teacher o'er us,
  Father, pastor, brother, friend,
Watching, praying, guiding, cheering,
  To a hopeful, happy end.

Till our hearts spontaneous thrilling
  With emotions heavenly sweet,
Gratefully pour forth a tribute,
  Humbly laid it at his feet.

Springing whence to realms exalted,
  Witness of a people's love,
See, another temple riseth
  To the Lord of Hosts above.

Have we not, then, cause of gladness?
  Shall we not in God rejoice?
Yes! and by the gracious blessing
  We will make a joyful noise.

Lift your voices, swell the chorus
  Till resounds the vaulted fane,
And responsive songs of angels
  Intermingle with the strain.

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

A NEW YEAR'S SANG.

This appears in the *Falkirk Herald* of January 8th, 1870.

A guid New Year, a guid New Year
  To ilka "bairn" o' Fa'kirk toon,
Where'er they be, on land or sea,
  Ower a' the earth's wide girdle roun'.
In pouch and person hale and soun'
  May this day fin' them ane and a';
While Heav'n blest may sweet content
  Keek kindly in on hearth and ha'.

The auld year's daun'er'd doon the brae,
  His warfare ower, his life race run;
And, like a king, we love to sing,
  Resigned his sceptre to his son.
And e'er his reign has weel begun,
  Amid the festive welcome cheer,
We gather roun' in Fa'kirk toon,
  And wish the "bairns" a guid New Year.

Time jogs alang, and as we peer
  Back thro' the memories of langsyne,
Pains, troubles, cares start unawares
  Upon the glance we cast behind.
But yet, amid their gloom we find
  A sunny rent, a pleasure gleam,
To licht oor road, and ease oor load,
  And droon the mools in Lethe's stream.

Why should we murmur at our lot,
  Tho' aft in life a blank we draw?
We'll draw again, and maybe gain
  A thumping prize to pay for a'.
The langest day aye flees awa',
  Years come and gae wi' lichtnin' speed;
And He wha kens oor ain bit kens
  Will bless and gie us a' we need.

Up, then, and gird us for life's faucht,
  Wi' pith and courage arm'd anew;
Hae faith and houp, hap, stap, and loup,
  And a' oor ills we'll warstle through.
Let peace, and love, and friendship true,
  Chase feud and bick'ring strife awa';
"Gree, bairnies, gree," oor motto be,
  As weel's the auld "Touch ane, touch a'."

A guid New Year, a guid New Year,
  To ilka "bairn" o' Fa'kirk toon,
Whare'er they be, on land or sea,
  Ower a' the earth's wide girdle roun'.
Fill! and the Cock's exulting craw
  Will answer back the thund'ring cheer—
Ance! twice! thrice! hip, hip, hip, hurrah!
  A guid New Year, a guid New Year.

CARRON GLEN.

This poem appears in the *Falkirk Herald* for June 1st, 1871, and, being signed "B," we take it to be the composition of Buchanan.

I love oft to wander through Carron's long glen,
Away from the bustle and troubles of men,
To muse on the beauties that circle around,
And list to the waters as swiftly they bound.

I look on the rocks at the Lady's bold Leap,
Where the waters are foaming in haste to the deep,
Never stopping a moment to rest by the way,
And hurrying on like the sun through the day.

I shrink when I view the dread torrent below;
But what care the waters? on, onward they go;
I think what a poor tiny creature am I,
Compared with the works of my Father on high.

I leave the rough rocks, and climb up the brae,
Quite charmed with the wild flowers that sprinkle my way;
Soon a bold spot is reached, called the Lady's Look-out,
And my eyes are entranced as I turn me about.

The trees are so lovely with foliage crowned,
Their branches hang gracefully down to the ground,
And, dipping their leaves in the rough pebbly stream,
They sparkle so brightly in every sunbeam.

The birds of the summer are warbling so sweet,
The river is coursing along at my feet,
The cattle are grazing in peace 'mong the grass,
And the rabbits are rustling the copse as they pass.

The scene, round and round as far as you look,
Is one of the best in Nature's wild book;
And all is so happy, and buoyant, and free,
Excepting the gazer, who never can be.

He has wandered through Carron in days that are past,
With one by his side whom he'll love to the last;
But now she has left him to wander alone,
With heart and affections as heavy as stone.

B.

TO AN AMERICAN HAM.

This parodial poem appears in the *Falkirk Herald* of May 30th, 1872, and being signed "B.," is, we presume, from Buchanan's pen.

And thou did'st walk about (how strange a story)
  In the back woods a year or two ago,
When beech and acorn nuts were in their glory,
  And autumn winds had not began to strew
Them on the ground in quantity stupendous,
To feed you up, and make you fit to send us.

Squeak! but alas, your tongue's been left behind you,
  Else would we ask you—who could tell so well—
What fat land waits old Europe's hordes to send to,
  To eat you up and not send here to sell;
Though we would hope it will be a long time yet,
Before that cheap hams from the West we can get.

We'd ask which side you took in the great struggles
  When North and South sought for predomination!
And why the Tammany ring and other juggles,
  Do flourish so in yours the greatest nation
On face of darn'd earth! and when you mean
To swallow Canada like dish of cream.

And Alabama claims shall settled be,
  Or if of that there's not the least intention,
When Cuba's annexation we shall see ;
  For of all these you must have heard the mention,
When backwood politicians argued over
Things of the State, the while you fed on clover.

If you won't answer, we will eat you up,
  And see what comes of this assimilation ;
Belfast does boast of hams—when you're cut up
  We'll then can tell which of you licks creation ;
Your goodness was your death, I calculate,
And so, here goes these slices for the plate.

B.

IN MEMORIAM.

JANET GENTLE, GRANGEMOUTH: DIED JUNE, 1872,
AGED 76 YEARS.

Published in *Falkirk Herald*, August 1st, 1872.

The days o' the simmer are wearing awa'
  Sae saftly, and silent, and solemn,
And time has recorded the first leaf's fa'
  In his never completed volume.
The earth on her bosom has laved her spoils
  Wi' lavish and generous measure,
And the face o' the Tiller is blythe wi' smiles
  As he reckons the mellowing treasure.
But grief is aroun' us, nae pleasure can cheer,
  Nor the clouds o' our sorrowing scatter,
For Grannie's asleep in the green kirkyaird
  By the braid Carron's gurgling water

In the green kirkyaird, aye! auld Grannie's asleep
'Mang the dust o' her kin there before her,
And whispering poplars, and drooping saughs weep
On the gowanless grass springing o'er her.
Fu' o' years and o' virtues, nae need to prepare
Had she to cross death's gloomy river,
But meekly confiding hersel' to His care,
She gave back her life to the Giver.
And we feel—na, we ken, that her spirit looks down
Through a halo of happiness smiling,
Frae the lang-promised rest which the people o' God
Enjoy as reward o' their toiling.

Then why do we fret? Ah deeply and sair
We miss her loved presence among us;
See! close by the ingle's her auld arm chair,
Untouched since the final stroke wrung us.
There she sat in the years o' her frailties and age,
Her face fu' o' kindliness shining,
Seeking daily, and finding in God's sacred page,
A solace against a' repining.
And her e'e waxing dim and her hair silver grey,
Her heid boo'd, her step tott'ring slowly,
Made her look like a saint o' a sphere no' oor ain,
Sae patient, sae gentle, sae holy.

Hoo aft frae His book to the bairns at her knee
She tauld ower the wonderfu' story,
Hoo the dear Son o' God dwelling doon here awee
Robed myriads o' men in His glory;
Hoo wounded and bruised He was led forth to dee,
Nae mortal to help or to save Him,
And yielded His charge to the Faither on hie,
Never losing a soul that He gave Him;

And then she would tell o' the children that stand
  Round the throne by the beautiful river,
Wi' veiled angels singing triumphant and grand
  His praises for ever and ever.

But there cam' a day when the fiery June sun
  Was shining in tropical splendour,
And birds sang their songs, and flowers one by one
  Burst forth into blossoming grandeur—
That worn out and feeble puir Grannie lay doon,
  The pulses o' life quickly fleeing;
And we saw in her face as the gloaming wore roon'
  That the Angel had passed—she was deeing.
The nicht sped, the cock crew, the morning was nigh,
  As we tearfully watched throbbing hearted,
A half uttered prayer, a lang weary sigh,
  And the spirit o' Grannie departed.

Hush! heard ye that soun? Ah! 'twas only the win'
  Making melodies wild and uncannie;
Yet we startle and turn, half ettlin' to find
  The form and the face o' Auld Grannie.
But we see the toom chair, and we hear on the wa'
  The cookoo knock's eerie tick tackin';
And we feel and we own, as the scaudin' tears fa',
  That to us she will never mair waukin';
Never mair, never mair, and nae pleasure can cheer,
  Nor the cloods o' oor sorrowing scatter,
For Grannie's asleep in the green kirkyaird
  By the braid Carron's gurgling water.

TO AN AULD FREEND.

Published in the *Falkirk Herald*, October 12th, 1872.

A perusal of the poem will show that the "Auld Freend" was Mrs. Buchanan, the poet's wife.

The simmer days are gane,
And winter's near again,
October leaves are swarling lifeless through the air,
Erratic-like they flee
Ower knowe, ower howe, and lea,
Fa'ing, fa'ing silently to rise nae mair.

The bitter biting blast
Sweeps wild and angry past,
And sabs wi' sullen sooch 'mang the woods far ben.
The streamlet swollen and broon
Comes rumbling, tumbling doon,
And rages boisterouslie in the rock-bound glen.

But steer the fire, gudewife,
Gin a' without be strife
A' within doors is sae cosy, bright, and clean,
The heart gets quite a heeze
To see the canty bleeze
And cheery fireside burnished like a new preen.

The nichts are lang and drear,
We'll mak them short, my dear,
Wi' wauking the memories o' lang-syne,
When warmed wi' youthfu' fire
My first, my last desire
Was to woo thee, to win thee, to ca' thee mine.

O happy, happy days,
When ower the broomie braes
We wandered on amid a warld bright and fair,
For thou wert a' to me,
As I was a' to thee,
And we lauch'd, while others gloom'd at cankered care.

I mind me, lassie, weel,
When first for woe or weal
I whisper'd, in the lown o' the auld beech tree,
A tale ye lang had guessed,
Though never yet confess'd,
Hoo I loo'd thee and hoo dear thou wert to me.

And no' a soond was heard,
No' e'en a flittin' bird
Disturbed the dreamy hush o' enraptured bliss,
Till breezes straying by
Caught up a happy sigh
And the answering response o' the first fond kiss.

The paukie leddie moon
And saucy stars look'd doon
And shimmered in the stream rippling at oor feet,
As, love, I coaxed thee—fain
To hear thee ower again
Confess the mutual flame in accents sweet.

Ah, wifie, mony years
O' mingled houps and fears,
O' sun and shade, has vanished since that dear time;
But time nor change can move
The unalterable love
That burns as bright and pure as in youth's gay prime.

Though care has left its trace
Upon thy bonnie face,
And darkened the yellow o' thy silken hair,
Still thou art unto me
The apple o' mine e'e
As dearly lo'ed and precious, as sweet, as fair.

Aroond oor feet hae sprung
Rare blossoms brave and young,
Gudesake, hear the gipsies skirling in their glee,
Hoots, gudewife, let them play;
In coming years they'll hae
To think o' sterner battles, like you and me.

May He wha rules o'er a',
"And marks the birdie's fa',"
Encompass them and thee through this warld o' sin,
And when life's faucht is past,
May auld and young at last
Gather a' thegither in the better warld abune.

THE ROYAL BONSPIEL.

DEDICATED TO A' KEEN CURLERS.

This appears in the *Falkirk Herald* of December 12th, 1872.

Ower the upland day is glinting
Wi' a pawkie lauching e'e,
And his crimson streaks are tinting
Festoon'd snawbank, bush, and tree.
Kingly Winter, crisp and hoary,
Rides the Ochil taps supreme,
While the mantle o' his glory
Spreads awa' ower plain and stream.

Wauken, Laird! Laird, are ye hearing?
  Heist ye, half the morning's lost,
(Gudesake, keep a man frae swearing,
  But he's maist as deef's a post).
Loch, and dam, and pond are frozen
  Hard as nails, the kintry roun',
Yet amang the blankets dozin'
  There ye sooch, ye cauldrife loon.

Up, for grand auld Sauls o' curling—
  Anakims wi' hearts o' steel,
Lang to see the war dowg's hurling
  In the warld-famous spiel.
Up, for!—wheest, my man, I hear ye,
  And like curler keen obey;
Heart, and hand, and sowl ne'er fear me;
  Thoosand broomcowes!—redd the way.

. . . .

On Blackford's royal field of ice, whaur curling kings in battle
Hae aft hilarious roared amid the polished boolder's rattle;
Frae East and West, frae North and South, the curling clans are meeting,
And roun' aboot gaes merrily a curler's hearty greeting.

The pick and wale o' sire an' son—auld Scotia's men o' mettle,
Frae yont Dunbar to Brig o' Ayr, in famous curling fettle—
Hae crossed the FORTH to meet the NORTH and fecht for curling glory,
Wi' "Ailsa Craig" and "Crawford John," renowned in curling story.

The NORTH has sent her gallant knights o' broom and speckled granite,
Led on by sturdy Athole men, wi' Athole brose and bannet,
While Perth, and Doune, and douce Dunblane aroun' the standard rally,
Wi' mony ither curling clans frae hillside and frae valley.

Up through the mists on tow'ring hills, the red, red sun is
gleaming,
And doon upon the stirring scene his cheerfu' rays are
beaming;
The frosty air is keen and snell, heart heezing and inspiring,
The young wi' courage for the spiel—the auld wi' vigour
firing.

Soop the rinks and mak' the rings—weel dune my hearties
steady;
Set the crampets, draw the lines, oor motto aye be ready;
This day we maun uphaud oor fame, and place on gouden
pages
The record o' oor douchty deeds for yet unborn ages.

Hurrah, the starting signal booms (noo, billies, mind the
scoring),
And up the rinks, wi' ne'er a cowe, a hunner stanes are
roaring.
"Pat lid," "weel drawn," "just fled the tee," or "lazy, laddie,
lazy,"
Resounds aroun' in every key, eneuch to ding ye crazy.

Grandly played, my dainty cock, my blessing aye be wi' ye,
There's ne'er a curler in the land could haud the can'le tae ye.
Noo "hirsel" cautious up the ice and lie beside the winner;
He's raging! peuch! and ower a' ice, as I'm a leeving sinner.

Brush her up, my hearts of oak, lay broom and baird
thegither;
Soop! soop! she's ower; weel may they claw their puzzled
pows and swither;
We're lying shot afore the gairds, sae snug and cunnin'
happit,
And no a "weke" within the rings for skilfu' hand to
chappit.

Noo up the "port" wi' heels, my lad; O dinna spare the poother;
Swing high ower hip the polished rock, and yerk her frae the shoother;
Attend her, men; she comes; ha! ha! she's on, I'se wad a guinea,
Aye! and scatters desolation like a stirk amang the cheenie.

And thus the spiel gaes bravely on, and keen, keen is the clamour;
Here's "crack an egg," or lay a gaird, and there lay on the hammer;
This clan is up, anither's doon, a third is deep in wrangle,
Till bearded men are like to fecht, and ower a hair's breadth cangle.

The sun gaes doon ower hoary "Ben," and gloaming shades are nearing,
And weary curlers quat the ice, some girning and some cheering;
But visions bricht o' beef and greens, wi' mony a reemin' caupie,
To ane and a' comes up to view, and mak's them croose and happy.

Hurrah for Scotland's manly game, her glorious game o' curling,
Whaur Peer and Peasant meet alike, wi' brooms triumphant swurling;
It nicks the stang o' cankar'd care, gies life new houp and vigour;
Gae try its pow'r, for just ae hoor, when King Frost reigns wi' rigour.

R. B.

PEACE, LOVE, AND HARMONY.

FREEMASONS' SONG.

(Written by request for music.)

The poet was a keen Freemason, and was a member of Lodge Zetland, 391. As we have already seen, some of his poems were signed "391." That given below was written at Londonderry, and appeared in the *Londonderry Journal*, signed thus—"R.B. (L.Z. 391) It is found in the *Falkirk Herald* of April 6th, 1872.

Brothers of the mystic tie,
  Weirdly link of ancient story,
Ere the Temple pierced the sky
  In its splendour, pomp, and glory,
Gather in fraternal ring,
  With our bright star beaming o'er us,
While with glowing hearts we sing
  In our universal chorus—
      Peace and love and harmony
        Roll onward as a river,
      Nor strife nor discord mar their course,
        No! never, never, never.

Kings with rival kings dispute,
  Boasting lineage from creation;
Trampling wisdom under foot,
  Nation wages war on nation;
But our mission, true and staunch,
  Halting never till victorious,
Is to rear the olive branch,
  Chaunting our immortal chorus.

      Peace and love, etc.

By the dust of royal Tyre,
  Kingly Hiram and his sages,
We will hand to son and sire,
  In the dim and distant ages—
PEACE (a noble legacy),
  LOVE (for passions indecorous),
HARMONY (so gloriously),
  Mingling thus a mighty chorus.

Peace and love, etc.

Up then, brothers, hand and glove,
  Heart and soul the task addressing,
Our great ARCHITECT above,
  Will, unfailing, give the blessing ;
Till to earth's remotest line,
  Nations proud shall fall before us
And with KINGS and PRIESTS shall join
  In this grand triumphant chorus—

Peace and love, etc.

THE WRECK OF THE KERTCH.

This poem, dated December 31st, 1872, and signed "391," was published in the *Falkirk Herald* of January 4th, 1873, with the following note added :—

Among all the sufferers by the wrecks of the Quebec traders on the Atlantic last month, none of them endured more hardships than the crew of the ship Kertch, of Grangemouth, commanded by Captain Malcolm Rennie. They were gallantly rescued by Captain Jones and crew of the Inman Line steamer City of Bristol.

Avast, then, messmates, I will tell
  Of the dangers we came through
On board the Kertch, on the western main,
  In the fall of seventy-two.

'Twas on the fifth November month
  We cleared from out Quebec,
And squared away to a six-knot breeze,
  Nor thought of storm or wreck.

The good old craft, with "stun' sails" set,
  Cleft through the rippling swell,
And all above, and all below,
  "Went as a marriage bell."

Our hearts were light, our hopes were high,
  And as each watch came round
We spun the yarns, and sang the songs
  Of the happy homeward-bound.

But soon, alas! the scene was changed;
  Ere twelve short days had fled
The sky grew dull as lead; the scud
  Flew madly past o'erhead.

Down came the wind in fitful gusts,
  Like moans of dying men;
The waves, like curling, hissing snakes,
  Dashed fiercely round us then.

And all that night and all next day
  We sped before the gale,
With not a stitch of canvas set,
  Save fore-top (close-reefed) sail.

Roared the loud wind, and poured the rain,
  The sea in mountains ran;
The good ship, staggering to and fro,
  Reeled like a drunken man.

Then up and spoke our brave captain,
  As good and staunch a tar
As ever paced a weather deck,
  Or lay aloft a spar.

"We'll heave to, lads," but as he spoke
  A mighty sea abaft
Burst like an avalanche on board,
  And swept her fore and aft.

The boats were stove, the forecastle
  Was flooded to the deck;
Abaft within the sheltering poop
  All ruin was and wreck.

Her opening timbers creaked and strained,
While each succeeding blast,
That dealt such merciless blows, appeared
More furious than the last.

At length, with concentrated rage,
Which made resistance vain,
On came the shrieking hurricane,
And smote her once again.

And over on her beam ends fell
The ship, 'mid many a groan,
While up to heaven rose the cry—
"Lord, save us, we are gone!"

The seething waters o'er us dashed,
As like a log she lay,
And fought and tore from stem to stern,
Like wild beasts o'er their prey.

And overboard a messmate dear
Was swept in one great sea;
We saw his ghastly, pleading face
Sink down upon our lee.

Eleven long dreary days and nights
We tossed upon the brink
Of death; no fire, no food to eat,
No water for to drink.

The dreadful sufferings we endured,
The hardships of our lot,
The pangs of want, the burning thirst,
Can never be forgot.

And all were sinking in despair,
  And hope began to fail;
When, lo! uprose a joyous shout:
  A sail in sight! a sail!

On came the heaven-sent messenger,
  And soon we trod once more
The firm deck of the noble ship
  Which brought us safe on shore.

Now, glory be to Him who rules
  And stills the stormy wave,
Who in His own good time sent forth
  Stout hearts and hands to save.

And honour be to Captain Jones,
  And to his gallant crew,
Who bore us from the wreck-doomed Kertch,
  In the fall of seventy-two.

31st Dec., 1872. 391.

DEATH OF MR. THOMAS B. TAYLOR, AGENT OF THE "ANCHOR" LINE, LONDONDERRY.

(From the *'Derry Journal*, March 18th, 1874.)

It is with unfeigned regret that we observe, in our obituary of this morning, the announcement of the death of this young and much-esteemed gentleman. Since Mr. Taylor came to the city, nearly three years ago, he had, by his amiable and unassuming manners, won golden opinions from all classes with whom he came in contact. The difficulties of an agent's position, in a large business like the Anchor Line's, are occasionally peculiarly trying, from the different characteristics of the passengers; but Mr. Taylor, by his mild and conciliatory demeanour, always succeeded in sending the warm-hearted Irish emigrants on their way rejoicing, leaving behind them their best and kindliest wishes for his welfare. For some time he had shown symptoms of declining health, and had recently been confined to the house. He rallied sufficiently, however, to induce the belief among his friends that he would soon be able to resume duty again. Unfortunately, the severe cold of last week caused a relapse, and after enduring much suffering, with a patience and fortitude truly wonderful, he succumbed to his malady on Monday morning. Mr. Taylor was only about twenty-five years of age, and, for one so young, had reached a position which reflected great credit on his abilities. As with anyone who knew him, he stood high in the estimation of his employers, and it was not once nor twice that the well-known head of the Anchor Line, Thomas Henderson, Esq., testified solicitude on his behalf. But the gentle spirit has fled, the

light has died out, and numerous friends, both in Scotland and 'Derry, will, for a long time to come, sincerely mourn that they will see it no more.

IN MEMORIAM.

THOMAS B. TAYLOR: Died 16th March, 1874, Aged 25 Years.

Published in the *Falkirk Herald*, March 28, 1874.

Around the Spring mid winter snows have flung
  Their cold embrace, and hill, and wood, and dell
Have cowered beneath. Wild winds have fiercely sung
  Their savage requiems ere they bade farewell.
God's flow'rets fair, that erst 'neath genial sky,
  Peeped shyly forth to suck the balmy air,
Before the withering blasts now lowly lie
  With drooping heads, meek emblems of despair.
Yet they will rise again—but he who sleeps
  Oblivious to the world's joys and tears—
Whose vital spark has fled—while friendship weeps,
  And sees no consolation in the coming years—
Will never rise again, ah, never more,
  Till the last trump shall sound from shore to shore.

R. B.

Londonderry, 17th March, 1874.

THE POET'S ALARM.

Bairn's *Herald*, bairn's *Herald*,
Oh ! what in the warld
Mak's ye spout a' the fau'ts o' a nee'bor ?
Would ye look nearer hame,
We don't stand alane,
A mark for the fearfu' declaimer.

Oh, wae's me ! Oh, wae's me !
If my lugs don't deceive me,
You may get the *Ships* nearer the Steeple ;
Twa or three back shop grocers
Keep *dosin'* oor topers —
We're sinken', I fear, to ta tevil.

Jerem'ay, Jerem'ay—
Sae douce in his way—
Was struck wi' *Free* fire an' *thinner ;*
'Tween Templar's trash,
And some auld wife's clash,
They kent scarcely saunt frae sinner.

Johnnie Speck, Johnnie Speck,
He spotted the set
That near brocht the Port tae destruction,
Toom bottles and jars
Tae haud oot the cauld,
On clerical midnight inspection.

Jock Timmer, Jock Timmer,
Ance a wuddiefu' sinner,
Nae mair cheap back shop libations
Will e'er cross your craig,
But, I'll bate a maik,
You'll *twa* bolt, led intae temptation.

Sleek Stichie, Sleek Stichie,
The querulous bitchie,
At cabbage aye snarl and grumble,
The Permissive Bill?
They may drink a' their fill,
If their braid claith they bring tae my thumble.

Sma'er fry, Sma'er fry,
"Gape wide, gloom, and sigh"
At fanatical denunciations;
The *Court* as a body
May sip at their toddy—
For guid sake mak' nae observations.

Poet Jock, Poet Jock,
Deal slightly your knocks
On the sculls o' oor precious conclave;
At the next extra stump
Gie a squint and a grunt—
For a saunt you'll pass 'mang the lave.

SONG—THE FISHER'S BRIDE.

This was issued on single slips without a date, and is another form of the song, "The Sailor's Bride," given on p. 66, and which appeared in the *Falkirk Herald* of February 24th, 1866.

A last embrace, and he lightly sprung
On board his barque in the bay,
As round with a tight'ning sheet she swung
And sped o'er the seas away.

Farewell! he cried; ere the morning sun
  O'er the towering rocks shall glide,
The spoils of the deep blue sea well won,
  I'll bring thee, my own dear bride.
But the wind wailed mournfully;
For the fishers that sleep in the stormy deep,
The wind wailed mournfully.

The day died down in a cloud of fire,
  And the Storm King rode the gale;
The lightning's and the thunder's ire
  Made many a stout heart quail.
But yet the good craft bravely fought
  Through the surging waters wide;
While poor Tom sighed as he sadly thought
  Of Mary his own dear bride.
And the gale sang mournfully;
For the fishers that sleep in the stormy deep,
The gale sang mournfully.

A shattered wreck, in the day-break's glare,
  On the sea-wash'd shingle lay;
And a struggling form in wild despair
  Was drowning nigh in the bay.
See! an eager hand is stretched to save,
  But the fierce receding tide
Whirl'd poor Tom down to a lone sea grave
  From Mary, his own dear bride.
And the wind wailed mournfully;
For the fishers that sleep in the stormy deep,
The wind wailed mournfully.

I'M WEARY WAITING, MOTHER DEAR.*

This song does not seem to have been published in Buchanan's lifetime. A copy of it in the poet's handwriting, set to a melody of singular beauty, was found among others after his death.

I'm weary waiting, mother dear,
Sad sighing day by day;
And will the sailor soon be here
That's been so long away;
He promised when, with many a tear,
We parted on the shore,
He would come back within a year—
One little year, no more.

CHORUS—I'm weary waiting, mother dear,
My own love on the sea,
Blow fair, thou gentle gales, and bring
The sailor boy to me.

I'm weary waiting, and asleep,
When day's bright glory dies,
I dream of storms upon the deep
And angry flushing skies.
And ever, ever, woe is me,
Ere slumb'ring hours have flown
With rent and tattered sails, I see
A wave-worn barque go down.

CHORUS—I'm weary waiting, etc.

I'm weary waiting, but I'll twine
A rose-wreath in my hair—
The charm which won my love lang syne
When life was young and fair;
And maybe o'er the silvery foam,
From some far sunny shore,
Sweet winds will waft my wand'rer home,
To part, to part no more.

CHORUS—I'm weary waiting, etc.

BABY'S BIRTHDAY.*

When all the summer flowers were gone,
  And leaves began to fall,
God sent us one fair autumn flower,
  A lovelier flower than all.
Fresh from the spreading tree of life,
  Our pearl-white baby blossom,
Plucked as if by some angel's hand,
  Fell on my darling's bosom.

Never shall I the joy forget,
  The hour of peril past,
When first my gaze the mother's met,
  In that one fond look cast.
A look that spoke a thousand thoughts,
  But one all thoughts above,
Revealing that blest miracle,
  A mother's wondrous love.

O, dearer grew those tender eyes,
  And dearer that dear face,
And that new smile, Madonna-wise,
  That filled with light the place,
When first a little voice arose
  Upon my raptured ear,
The words, "Our child," breathed sweet and low,
  Made us to each more dear.

O, words of deep significance,
  Stirring the inmost heart,
Pleading the soul with purer faith
  To choose the better part.

For what but leading our dear babe
  The way the Saviour trod,
Should teach us more to lean on Him,
  Our Father and our God.

I see with reverence our wee flower
  Its little life begin,
Fresh from the great Creator's hand,
  Untainted yet by sin,
And cannot wonder at the words
  Of Christ, in comfort given,
Suffer ye them to come to Me,
  For e'en of such is heaven.

And so, though summer's flowers are gone
  And leaves begin to fall,
The blossom of that autumn dawn
  Will compensate for all.
How kind of God it was to bless,
  In winter's darkest hours,
Our happy home, and lives, and love,
  With this sweet flower of flowers.

MY KATIE.*

The subject of this effusion was the poet's youngest child, who died at Londonderry when eleven months old.

Like a sweet fairy blossom she cam' when the days
  Were wearin' lang and cheery in the spring,
The buds were on the trees, the gowans on the braes,
  And the young birds flutt'ring on the wing.
Like a rare flower she bloomed when the glad summer sun
  Soar'd high amid the silver and the blue,
And ilka day unfaulded her beauties one by one;
  "My Katie," "sweet Katie," "bonnie wee doo."

Twa roses were her lips, and her saft gowden hair
Fell lichtly as the cooing o' the win',
While the wee cunning curls peeping out here and there
Made her seem as a cherub frae abune.
And her dark blue een, flashing glances free and bright,
O'erflowing wi' that love which kens nae fear,
Wondering and wandering or dancing wi' delight;
"My Katie," "sweet Katie," "bonnie wee dear."

The days o' simmer faded and the reft leaves flew,
Broon and sere are valley, hill, and fauld,
The storm cloods cam' doon and the lood win's fiercely blew,
Sure harbingers o' winter cruel and cauld.
Then the scowling King cam' wi' his age dark and grim,
Bringing death, despair, and poortith in his train,
And my darling's heid grew heavy and her een grew dim;
"My Katie," "sweet Katie," "bonnie wee wean."

Yet ere the Angel passed the spring again was nigh,
The birds sang, flowers bloomed bonnie as before,
Then the spirit caged escaped to its beauteous home on high
To sigh, to weep, to suffer nevermore.
Where countless hosts of children in ever shining rays,
Gathered round the throne of the great I Am,
Sing forth in glorious unison His everlasting praise;
"My Katie," "sweet Katie," "Christ's wee Lamb."

LONDONDERRY. R. B.

JEAN.*

This song was never published. The MS., neatly written in the poet's handwriting, was found among other papers after his death. The subject of the song was the poet's second youngest child, who died in 1883.

Frae the purple-tipp'd hills, wi' a red low'ring smile,
The king o' the morning looks doon on oor isle,
And lichts ha' and cottage wi' glad simmer sheen,
To wauken the sleepers and bonnie wee Jean.

She opens her keekers, sae blue and sae bright,
And glowers roon aboot in amaze and delight;
O whar am I noo na, or whar hae I been,
Speer the quick flashing glances o' wee "Neenie Peen."

Syne she cracks to hersel in a Gaelic ye ken
(I speak na to warld-wise, grey-bearded men),
Yabbling stories sae grave what she did, what she saw,
Or lauching and flyting at naething ava.

Jean's wide wauken noo, and the gleg cuttie sune
Lets me ken that it's time to get up and begin
The darg o' the morning, to wash, scoor, and clean,
But first thing of a' to mak' "nim nim" for Jean.

Wi' her wee drummie fu' wha sae happy as Jean,
Her tongue scarcely lies for a moment, I ween,
She tots up and doon stairs, she tots out and in,
Singing sangs scant o' music but brimfu' o' din.

She shoo's to the "leerie," she moo's to the coo,
She skirls wi' delight when I grumph like the soo,
And a wee curly doug, in the licht o' her een,
Is a hale warld o' pleasure to bonnie wee Jean.

Up on tables she'll speel, into corners she'll creep,
'Mang pats and 'mang pans, till she's black as a sweep,
And the duds on her back are a fricht to be seen,
Wi' coom and wi' coal-stoor, the wild steering Jean.

Whar's my bauchels and mutch? Whar's the kaims for
my hair?
They're a' in the stoup amang ither sic ware,
Every scrap she picks up, be it dirty or clean,
Gangs its wa's to the aum'ry o' wee "Neenie Peen."

O guid keep the lassie, she's doon, I declare,
And bumped a' her broo on the staps o' the stair,
Noo my lugs ring again to a sang ever green,
Auld Nature's ain maisic—the piper, wee Jean.

Frae morning to nicht she's ne'er oot o' mischief,
Whiles lauching wi' gladness, whiles sabbing wi' grief,
Turning a' thing agee, yet I daurna compleen,
Though I'm maist driven daft wi' the pranks o' wee Jean.

I daurna complain, for it's better to bear
A' the daffin' and din, a' the tear and the wear
Which steering health brings, than to see on the wane
A bonnie wee blossom wi' sickness and pain.

Ah! ance I mind weel—hoo can I forget?—
When the dark Angel hovered a wee ower my pet,
But he fled ere the morning licht broke on the scene,
And waukened to life again bonnie wee Jean.

God guide thee, my darling, on life's troubled way;
In mystic years coming wha kens but I may
See thee throned in a heart, big and brave, as a queen,
To reign bless'd and blessing, a warm, loving Jean.

R. B.

MY OWN.*

THE POET TO HIS WIFE.

Not unto me the grateful earth
  Can yield, with all her store
Of riches and bright gems of worth,
  A treasure I love more
Than she whose image ever twines
  Around life's thorny way,
Whose pure and gentle spirit shines
  Through love from day to day.

She walks not forth with haughty stare
  Amid the listless throng
Of idle pomp and tinsell'd glare
  That moves the world along.
Pure as from Nature's silver stream,
  With meek and artless air,
The lady of my heart's bright dream
  Is peerless 'mong the fair.

The music of the mazy grove
  Falls sweet upon the ear ;
But there are chords when touched wi' love,
  More lasting and more dear.
'Tis when the mute expressive eye
  Bids loving hearts rejoice.
Entranced we gaze and listen by
  The music of the voice.

The rose in all its loveliness,
  Sweet gem among the flowers,
That spring to Nature's soft caress
  In groves or lady bowers,

Is beautiful when summer reigns;
But winter storms arise,
And soon its mystic beauty wanes,
Then withereth and dies.

But there's a flower that ever blooms
More bright from age to age,
The star that gilds with sweet perfumes
Life's long and dreary page.
'Tis that which lives on earth, on sea,
In every clime 'tis known:
True love, such as I feel for thee,
My treasured one, my own.

LORD, ACCEPT.*

Written September 16th, 1871. This and the following piece were the last the poet wrote. They are printed for the first time.

Lord, accept a song from me.
Humble though the offering be,
It is uttered from the heart,
All my being taking part.
From Thy paths in youth I strayed
And Thy precepts disobeyed,
Ah! I see my folly now
As with sorrow low I bow.

Yet, dear Lord, whene'er my cry
Reached the mercy seat on high,
Thou drew near with smiling face,
Full of tenderness and grace.

Loving, cheering, day by day,
Chasing all my grief away,
Thou with hope my life renewed
And my doubts and fears subdued.

Blessed Jesus, how can I,
Even until my latest sigh,
Sing Thy praises in a strain,
Worthy of the God-Lamb slain?
Slain that we, the vile, might win
Freedom from our debt of sin,
And with Christ in realms of bliss
Find eternal happiness.

O most precious, O most sweet,
See me lowly at Thy feet,
Trembling yet rejoicing
In the presence of my King.
King of Kings, and am I Thine?
Lord of Lords, and art Thou mine?
Yes, I hear Him gently say,
All thy sins are washed away.

THE LAST.*

Written at Londonderry.

A few short months and where
Shall this frail body be ?
In the cold, cold grave among the dead
Of the silent cemetery.
A few tears shed, a few flowers spread,
A lingering glance, farewell,
Come shut the gates and let him rest
Within his narrow cell.

A few short months and where
Shall this caged spirit be ?
Among the lost or with the saints
To all eternity.
Bought with the price of precious blood
From doubts, and griefs, and fears,
Shall I with angels sing His praise
Through never ending years ?

Yes ! blessed be His holy name,
Though vile and full of sin,
I boldly knocked, and lo ! the door
Was oped and let me in.
Rejoice, my soul, rejoice,
Enrolled as one of His,
I go to meet my Sovereign Lord,
And see Him as He is.

THE

PROSE WRITINGS

OF

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

As we have already remarked, the original "Cock o' the Steeple" was Alexander Birnie, a writer who contributed to a newspaper called the *Falkirk Liberal*. The *nom de plume* was afterwards adopted by Robert Buchanan in the articles contributed by him to the *Falkirk Herald*, and which we now reproduce.

The following note on the Town's Steeple will explain the opening sentences in the first address to the "'Bairns' o' Fa'kirk":—

In 1869 a part of the stone cornice of the Steeple gave way, and fell to the ground. Much consternation was caused among the inhabitants, an idea seemingly prevailing that the whole fabric was unsafe. A special meeting of the Town Council was held, and orders given to have the Steeple pointed from the vane downwards, and to substitute wooden for stone cornices, and otherwise put the building in a proper condition. These repairs were carried out by the late Mr. David Draper at a cost of £135, this being the first occasion since its erection in 1814 that the Steeple had been overhauled.

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

From the *Falkirk Herald*, October 28th, 1869.

Thank ye, "bairns"! I fin' kinna firmer on my perch noo, and I can turn my neb to a nor'-easter wi' a feeling o' security I haena kent for a lang time. Mony a nicht, when the wind whistled, and roared, and blew, till the day cam' on, my tap swithered whether it would tak' a fleeing loup to Maggie Wood's Loan or stick still, and the Steeple under my feet rock'd and rowed like a ship in a storm, hae I contemplated the awfu' possibeelity o' yer wauk'ning in the morning and finding me, or rather my remains, a wing here an' a leg there, a' the way alang the street as far as Hill's * tobacco shop; while the clock, the big bell and the wee bell, Sawnie Learman's † shop, the Duke o' Wellington, and maybe hauf-a-dizen hooses were lying in ruins as high as the daunder hill o' Carron airnwarks. Thochts o' thae kin' made me unco eerie whiles, and I aften won'ered if, in the coorse o' yer deliberations for the guid o' the toon, ye wad ne'er turn yer attention to the Steeple, and gie its watherworn sides, its rents and scaurs, a claut o' lime or cement to stap the ravages o' the auld scythe-bearer. I need hardly say hoo prood I was when I heard ye determine on the very thing I had been sae lang greening for. I was as proud as I was that day whan "Auld Skebs," ‡ lang deid and in his grave, puir body, flew the muckle dragon ower my heid, and bedecked the Steeple in flags and banners in honour o' Queen Victoria, wha passed through the High Street in a carriage and four on her way to

* No. 51 High Street, then occupied by the late Councillor Hill, tobacco manufacturer.

† The shop in the Steeple long occupied by the late Alexander Learmonth, butcher.

‡ William Muirhead, a pig-dealer, and proprietor in the Back Row.

Embro'.* I think I still see her braw, sonsie face as she beck'd to this ane and booed to that ane, and smiled to the neist ower the carriage door, while the "bairns" roared and shouted, and cheer'd wi' frantic delicht. And after she gaed by, what a drouth was slocken'd in drinking the health o' the young Queen, and what a job "Lang Pate" † had in keeping the "bairns" in order. But Pate kent brawly hoo to keep the refractory kin' in han', for he had a way o' his ain in getting roond them that naebody else could either dae or understaun'. On this occasion he let the "bairns" tak' their wull o' the fun for a while, and I could hae laugh'd mysel', if it were possible for a cock to laugh, to see the diversion. First, near the Robert's Wynd, Jamie M'Nee, ‡ the clean-shankit barber, was performing a magnificent turn on his left heel to an admiring audience, consisting o' "Stibbie Stobbie," § "Gaping Tibbie," || "Dair Dooglass," ¶ the "Moose," ** "Jalap Jean," †† and twa wee sweeps; while

* 13th September, 1842.

† Peter Crawford, for many years a well-known police constable in Falkirk.

‡ A barber, lean and lank, who, when he had imbibed too freely, performed some wonderful evolutions on his heel, declaring at the same time in stentorian tones, "I am Jamie M'Nee, the clean-shankit barber."

§ A woman of short stature, who walked with the aid of a stick, which enabled her to protect herself from the pranks played upon her by the youths of Falkirk.

|| So named from the fact that her front teeth were so prominent that she could not close her mouth. She begged from door to door, carrying on her back a paralytic son.

¶ Acted as a policeman. A mixture of officialdom and blackguardism.

** Thomas Roberts by name, skilled as a bird-catcher.

†† Jean Smeaton. Jean is said to have had a strong propensity for stealing the food of her neighbours while engaged in the harvest field, and they, thinking like Jamie Fleming, the Laird of Udny's fool, that desperate diseases required desperate cures, poured some of the liquid extracted from the Jalapa plant into Jean's soup. From that time she was known as "Jalap Jean." She was a skilful

on the opposite side o' the street auld Tam Jamieson,* Bell Neil,† the "Hoolit,"† and a crood o' shaemakers were listening attentively to a grand oration frae that distinguished individual "Mexico"§; but just as he was soaring awa' up to the cloods, a bauchel sent his hat fleeing, bashed into the shape o' an auld can run ower by a cart wheel. A boilt tatae next gaed whizzing by the side o' his head, and flattened itsel' against the brig o' auld Tam's nose. The shaemakers roared and laughed, the crood increased, Jamie M'Nee lost his admirers; even Jamie himsel', wi' a bound and a hap, came ower the street to see what was up, and there was like to be a regular shindy with muckle discrimination as to friend or foe. But Pate was watching them, and had the crood dispersed before ye could say knife. Crack o' yer day police, and yer nicht police, and yer detectives—Pate was worth a dizzen o' them. He could smell an evil-doer as a doug smells a rat. He was the Vidocq o' Fa'kirk, in fact, and (did ye ever hear a cock quote Shakespeare?) we'll never look upon his like again. But what am I havering aboot? I was

beggar, and watched daily for the local gentry as they did their shopping in town, curtseying low and often until she received a copper.

* An old worthy, whose gastronomic powers are said to have almost equalled those of the famous Rab Ha'. Dressed with a red plush vest having two rows of big brass buttons, Tam looked a "power." He made a daily call on the principal merchants, having always some old time story to relate.

† Assisted her husband, Ned Neil, to clean the streets of Falkirk.

‡ Robert Johnstone by name, whose head was shaped like that of a bird's. Robert was musical, and played the kettledrum in the Falkirk Instrumental Band, formed by a well-known local musician, Richard Cooper.

§ John Simpson by name. A man of good education and in easy circumstances, who, after spending several years in Mexico, returned to his native town. He was much sought after for a time, and in whatever company he found himself he soon made it known that he had been to Mexico. From this circumstance Simpson became known in Falkirk as "Mexico." Although at one time possessed of considerable property in town, "Mexico" ended his days in Falkirk Poorhouse.

saying I was prood to hear that ye were going to dae something for the Steeple, and my joy was doubly enhanced when ye ordered that real "bairn" o' mine, Davie Draper, to begin operations. I kent he wad dae his duty, and I'm no' disappointed. I'm as firm on my perch noo as a limpet on a rock. Cockle-leerie-law!

What wonderfu' changes tak' place in the coorse o' thretty years! Wonderfu'! Wonderfu'! When the wind blaws everything toosy, I whirl aboot frae east to wast, frae north to south, and everywhere changes o' every description meet my e'e. Naething's the same except Hagart's lions,* wha still sit on the tap o' the gate posts, glowering fiercely over at the manse which has risen up to spoil the view, o' which they had sae lang held a monoply. There's naething spoils my view, guid be praised; and I can see a'thing gaun on jist the same as when I first flew up to the Steeple tap. And what hae I seen? Awa' doon through the Carse I hae seen twa-three hooses in the midst o' a muddy pond increase to the dimension o' a thriving sea-port toon. I mind the time when it was ca'd Sea Lock, and a' its inhabitants were the "Bummer,"† Sawnie Lyle, the flesher, and Archie Batherstane, the pilot, wi' their heirs and forebears. Twa three Carron clippers—clippers, eh! —and a wheen scows comprised the shipping o' the place; and when ony o' them arrived frae a lang voyage o' three weeks' duration, the hale population cam' fleeing oot to bid the illustrious strangers welcome. Look at the Port noo, wi its capacious docks, whar ships frae every quarter load and unload their cargoes; its fleets o' splendid steamers; its basins cramm'd wi' timber, brocht frae America in grand-looking sailing vessels belonging to the Port; its saw mills and shipbuilding yairds; its kirks and its schules; its

* The figures of lions which surmount the pillars on the main entrance gate to Bantaskin estate, then in possession of Charles Hagart, Esq.

† John Morrison, keeper of the Crown Hotel, Grangemouth, and who had a large contractor's business in "hauling" boats from the "Port" to Glasgow and other places on the Canal.

building society, that has reared a wee toon o' its ain; its curling clubs, its bowling green, and its Masonic Lodge; and, lastly, its railway, whar ye not only get a chape hurl, but civeelity alang wi't, frae a' the officials aboot the line. There's changes for ye! and what's brocht it a' aboot? Enterprise and public speerit. The Port bodies were aye famed for pluck, and it sticks till them yet; and I houp it will stick to them till Johnnie Mackay or Sawnie Tamson is made Lord Provost, and gets the honour o' knichthood for entertening the Prince of Wales when he comes to open the next new docks in person. I whirl aboot again, and in the wast I see warkshops and foundries springing up like mushrooms alang the banks o' the Glasca Canal, gieing employment to hundreds o' my horny-handed "bairns." I see the King o' Camelon * daeing his best to elevate his subjects in the moral and social scale o' society, neither sparing his purse nor his person in his laudable endeavours. I only wish I had Charlie Wright's † cornopean, and could sound it as weel—I wad blaw the praise o' every man wha does something, be it ever so little, to assist his brither wha happens to be a wee thing lower doon on the rungs o' fortune. Then, nearer han', what bonnie buildings are springing up to grace the rim o' oor guid auld toon. Whar will ye see a sweeter spot than Mayfield?—doubly sweet to the "bairns," as ance a year, when tree and flower hae donn'd their brawest and their bravest bloom, they hae leave to roam through its winding walks and mak' love in its fairy bowers, while the ever-green Camelon band waukins the echoes wi' its glorious strains, raising a glow o' pride in every breist wi' its "Scotland Yet," and making ye maist like tae greet wi' its "Last

* The late Mr. Ralph Stark, of Camelon, whose interest in his native village will long be remembered.

† The late Mr. Charles Wright, a well-known Camelon musician, who for twenty-five years conducted the first Camelon Brass Band, a combination long and favourably known throughout Scotland. The Wright Memorial Brass Band seek by their name to perpetuate his memory.

Rose o' Simmer." Flourish the Camelon Band, I say, and lang may it blaw its sweetest music, and uphaud the fame it has won and held for sae mony years. Southward I dinna notice mony changes. Twa-three snug cottages hae sprung up in the way o' decoration, and there's a muckle uncouth-looking building, wae's me! whar puir "bairns" end their days in. My heart aften nips when I glower doon ower the wa's and see the bodies taking a sunning in guid wather—their lives seem sae aimless and blank—naething to look forrit to but the grave, and yet, considering a' things, they are kindly treated too; far better indeed, than gin they were left to the voluntary hand o' charity; for what wi' the increased cost o' every necessary o' life, there's no muckle left to gie awa' to onybody, after paying twenty shilling i' the pound. But sic reflections sune flee when I look doon again and see, richt under my neb, a scene which mak's my hairt loup, my wings clap, and my thrapple get ready for a craw. In the lang simmer nichts, when the big blazing sun is fa'ing awa' doon mid clouds o' crimson'd gowd ower the wastern hills, and the bonnie thrush is singing its evening hymn amang the trees o' Callendar, scores o' the "bairns" are getting a life draught on the greens o' Comely Park and Pleasance. The day's darg is ower, and care and trouble's up the lum as the white jack rins gracefully up the rink, and steady hands and sure een are drawing, guarding, and driving wi' a zeal and ardour delightfu' to witness. That's a change, and a noble ane, frae the time when the chief enjoyment o' the "bairns," after a day's darg, was cutting aff a soo's lugs or a cat's tail, and sending some puir wee doug howling through the streets wi' an auld pan at its heels. But thae days are gane, and noo there's nae lack o' innocent and enjoyable pastime for the "bairns." The young anes, wi' a speerit and determination worthy o' them, hae fairly established cricket in the toon; and I'm sair mista'en if there's no amang them the stamina and skill o' first-class cricketers, and it's no at a' oot o' reason, as Robin Barr,* the auldest cricketer i' the toon, will tell ye

* Mr. Robert Barr of Arnotdale, a warm friend of the poet, and one who took an enthusiastic part in all outdoor sport.

a', to think that the day's no far distant when the "bairns" may wauken up to find an advertisement in the *Herald* to this effect:—"GRAND CRICKET MATCH—THE ELEVEN OF ALL ENGLAND *v.* TWENTY-TWO O' FA'KIRK. The bands o' the Fa'kirk Iron Works and Camelon will attend and play a choice selection," etc. There's a prospect for ye. Possible, but no' probable, ye say? But it's baith possible and probable, and, as shair's I'm a cock, I'll leeve to see't, and craw ower Fa'kirk's victory to the bargain. Coming back to the booling greens, I hae aften thocht what a gran' thing it wad be if ye could get up a district tournament. Ye hae aften, and very successfully on the whole, pitted yer strengths against neebouring clubs—as clubs—but I would like to see ye on yer mettle single handed. I wad like to see hoo yer Wyses, Barrs, Murdochs, Rosses, Aitkens, Beebys, Mitchells, Borlands, and ither cracks, wad perform against the stars o' Denny, Larbert, Stenhousemuir, Grangemouth, Bo'ness, and 'Lithgow. If ye could mak' up yer minds and 'gree, Fa'kirk wad be admirably adapted for the trial, wi' its twa greens and central situation. Of course there wad hae to be prizes, but I think there wad be sma' difficulty aboot that part of the programme. The chief o' every club wad subscribe liberally for the honour o' his men; our Provost, in his ready hand and willin' heart, wadna be ahint, and I wad expect Davie Strang * (anither o' the cracks) to gie a pair o' links, a ring, or something to swell the prize list. What a gran' day it wad be for the toon. Besides, it wad gie ye something to look forrit to, something to crack aboot, something that would impart vigour into a' yer efforts preparatory to the event; and mair glorious than a' that, the winners wad be immortalised in the *Fa'kirk Herald*, baith in verse and prose; and San Broon, † who draws folk's picters to perfection through a spy-glass looking thing doon the Kirk Wynd, wad keek into the spy-glass and bring oot the picter o' the winners, and

* The late Mr. David Strang, watchmaker and jeweller.

† The late Mr. Alexander Brown, one of the first to practise the art of photography in Falkirk.

hing'd up in his glass case for thousands to admire and envy. It's a lang time till next simmer, however; but ye can gie the maetter a rum'ole ower in yer minds, and gin it pleases ye, set aboot the arrangements as early as ye can, as it's aye best in cases o' the kind to tak' time by the forelock. Turning awa' frae sic a pleasant subjec', I look east and north, and I see mony changes that hae come aboot year by year. New kirks, new schules, new warks, hae sprung up, bedecking the outskirts, in great variety. Nane o' them, however, require particular notice; sae I look nearer hame, and poke my neb into the affairs o' the auld toon itsel'. And what wonderfu' changes hae ta'en place sin' first I look'd doon wi' muckle pride frae my dizzy hicht; what new hooses hae been built; what new shops hae been open'd, wi' big glass windows, as braw baith ootside and in as ony shop in aether Glesca or Embra. Whar noo's the Deil's Close,* and the Beetler's Howf,† whar the "bairns" used to hear the man that was killed wi' a beetle, beetling awa' like mad in the lang dark nichts? Gane, pu'd doon, and grand new buildings erected on the ground they used to cumber. Then the street has been paved frae end to end. The Kirk Wynd and the Coo Wynd, that ance were second editions o' the Slough of Despond, are noo up to the standard o' progress in the nineteenth century. The Back Raw, and a' the ither Raws, are in fairish order; while every street and every lane, though no' sae weel lichted as they micht be, are still no' that ill after a'; while a copious supply o'

* Now the close leading through Wilson's Buildings, 109 High Street.

† There is a tradition that in the close leading from the Blue Bell Court, 103 High Street, into Robert's Wynd, a countryman was "beetled" to death one feeing Thursday evening. From this circumstance the close was known as the "Beetler's Howff." On a quiet evening a peculiar sound could be heard coming from the close, which the juvenile portion of the community ascribed to the ghost of the beetled countryman. Groups of people used to collect in the evenings listening to this peculiar sound, which was afterwards found to be caused by water dripping from a pipe.

guid water completes the list o' changes for the guid that hae come roon' wi' the days gane by. The motto o' the late Provost, Tammas Kier, used to be "The greatest good for the greatest number," and richt nobly he carried it into practice during the nine years he sat in the Chief Magistrate's chair. The improvements he effected are almost numberless, and will leeve lang after he has gane doon to his narrow bed, and the daisies are nodding in the morning breeze roon the monument set up by loving hands in tribute to his memory. Prood was I when the "bairns" put their heids thegither and drew their purses to present him wi' a sma' token o' their appreciation o' his services. He was worthy o' the honour; for ane that has the guid o' toon mair at heart never breathed, and few kens that better than the Cock o' the Steeple. Lang leeve his honest, kindly heart; it has aye a warm beat for poortith's ca', and could ill be spared frae the toon, which claims him as its ain. While passing a word o' praise for Tammas, it manna be thocht I'm forgetting yer present Chief Magistrate, Provost Russel, the Bailies and Councillors that work sae hard for the welfare o' the toon. Johnnie was aye a favourite "bairn" o' mine, and I'm unco weel pleased wi' the way he has inaugurated his magisterial reign. He has baith the will and the pooer to do guid, and what he has already done may be looked upon jist as an earnest o' what he'll do in times to come. Only hae patience, "bairns," and aye remember, when things are no' gaun sae straucht as ye wad like, that baith he and his Cooncil are trying their very best to please ye and to mak' things better than what they found them. It's hard for folk to be gien' their time and brains in the regulation o' affairs without fee or reward, but it's harder still to get growls instead o' thanks for their pains.

In whirling aboot I hae been looking only at the bricht side o' the picter, but what o' the ither side? My memory is no' jist sae guid as it was before it gat roosty wi' wind and wather, but I hae mind o' mony things that hae

dwindled doon in the lap o' time, never mair to rise. There was the Carters' Ride, a grand auld institution which gied a holiday and a wheen oors' innocent diversion to as hard wrought and deserving a class o' chields as in a' the district; besides, it did a hauntle o' guid to the toon, as thoosands o' yairds o' ribbons and countless penny looking-glasses were sauld to decorate the horses' manes and the carters' bannets. The "Coulers' (Colliers') Parade" was anither institution that did the toon guid, as the men a' appeared in white breeks, and the haberdashers had sometimes sair wark to supply the needfu' article. The coulers, puir bodies, were better aff in thae days; they hadna sae muckle o' the truck and poundage systems as they hae now in some pairts o' Scotland to keep them doon and rob them o' their hard-won earnings, though I'm bound to say, there's no muckle o' the vile practice carried on hereabout. Baith thae demonstrations faded awa' and in their place Fa'kirk Races sprang up; but it was only a flash in the pan, for ae year's trial put an end to them for ever. The "bairns" had great fun, however, on the race-course fornent the Pikes, as sic awfu' races were never seen. There was a grand stand, frae which Jock Gardiner, the judge, and a wheen mair turf dignitaries, viewed the coorse. They didna view the races, for just as "Flee Catcher," pressed hard by "Bolting Maggie" and "Catch me if you can," and an auld white bung, were birring past on the first roond, the bottom o' the stand fell oot, and Jock and his associates disappeared like winking—a fact which the horses apparently kent, as "Flee Catcher" ran into the hedge, "Bolting Maggie" bolted ower the hedge into another park, and "Catch me if you can" either lay doon or stood stock still, and looked roond aboot for a drink, and the auld white bung won a maist exciting race by a park's length. The day's sport was wound up by a fit race for 7s. 6d., which Jock Hitton, the carter, won after a determined struggle wi' naebody that I could see—for the ithers a' fell or disappeared lang before the

winning post was in sicht. Thus began and ended Fa'kirk races, and though I dinna lament the fact very muckle, they afford a sample o' mony a better undertaking that has appeared only to dee awa' again, leaving ye the waur o' the loss. I haena the time, and I doot the Aeditor o' the *Herald* will grudge the space to enumerate them a', but I'll mention a few that the toon hasna muckle credit by in letting slip. On a bonnie simmer morning, when my neb was towards the south, I hae seen the lads and lasses, auld and young, tripping up the brae to the High Station, whar a train stood puffing and anxious to be aff wi' its fraught to Glesca. Arrived in that wonderfu' city, they cut doon through the streets to the Broomielaw, whar a braw steamer was waiting to receive them, and soon the "Free Gardeners" and their freends were steaming doon the Clyde on their annual excursion to the jovial strains o' a hunner voices in the chorus o' the "Boatie Rows," sung wi' a pith and vigour that did the "bairns" credit. What a glorious day was spent amang the hills and lochs o' the famous river. There was nae rowdyism there; every ane did everything they could to mak' everybody else happy, and he was ill to please wha was nae sae indeed. Wullie Binnie said, "Od, man! it's grand—a public house a' the way;" but, though such was the case, nane gat fou. Laird Aitken's big, jolly, kindly-hearted brewers sat in the bows o' the boat, and rifted and sang to an admiring crood o' lads and lasses a' the way back to Glesca; while doon in the cabin "The Gardeners" made speeches ower their toddy and toasted everybody's health a' roond to their hearts' content. They generally gat hame aboot ten at nicht, after spending the happiest day in a' the year, and which was nae sooner past than they were wishing back again. Say, will it never come back again? That's a question I leave the Gardeners to answer at their next meeting in the Gardeners' Ha'. Then there were the Public Park* *furore*, which only gied

* That field to the west of Falkirk Laundry which was let to the town by Mr. Aitken of Gartcows at a nominal rent.

the "bairns" a taste o' what a free park was; the Games that were drooned oot by a shooer o' rain; the Choral Union; and the lectures conducted by the Young Men's Christian Association—even the Schule o' Airts* gaed doon last winter, though I see it's risen again. (All honour to those wha were instrumental in the undertaking. I reckon them amang the toon's trustiest freends; and if every ticket is not sauld, and the Corn Exchange crammed every nicht till this year's maist admirable programme is exhausted, ye'll be chape saired gin ye should never hae anither session.) The Public Leebrary is also numbered amang the things that were, and mony mair things beside that were usefu' to the moral and social welfare o' the hale community. Sic a state o' things is no' at a' creditable to the "Bairns," and shows a want o' that speerit for which they lang hae been famous. I trust that ye'll draw up yer breeks and revive the auld associations sae necessary baith intellectually and physically; and in ony o' yer new schemes—sich as the pootry show—ye'll carry it on wi' vigour, and no' allow it to collapse in a single exhibition; and wha kens but I may yet leave my perch and win the champion medal for the best breed o' Cochin Chinas mysel'?

And noo I conclude. I hae missed mony things, and skipped ithers, that I would hae liked to notice mair at length—the Choral Union and the Public Leebrary amang the number. Aiblans, I'll dae sae some ither time. Meanwhile, I wish ye every success, and reiterate thanks for yer kindness. Pitting everything thegither, ye haena sae very muckle to be ashamed after a' o' the progress ye hae made in years gane by. May ye hae something to brag o', something to haud proudly up for emulation to the kintry at large, as ye wander forth into the dim vista o' the years to come.

* An institution, begun in 1827, which had for its object the instruction of mechanics and others in popular science and the useful arts. After many ups and downs, it ceased to exist about 10 years ago.

(From the *Falkirk Herald*, December 9th, 1869.)

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

SECONDLY.

NOO that the Feeing Fair and the Muneecipal Election are bye, the toon has resumed its usual appearance—an appearance that's no' very cheering at weel; for to look at its deserted High Street, one might think that a ball could be fired frae the east en' to the wast en' and no' kill a leeving crater. Aiblins it'll no' aye be sae—aiblins there will be plenty o' wark and tred for a' the "bairns" ere New'r-day comes roon, and mony a guidwife will hae eneuch and to spare to lay in a kebbuck or a bun to treat speerin' freends and neebors. I houp sae, at ony rate, wi' a' my heart, for when the "bairns" are weel and thriving, I feel weel and courageous as a lion mysel', but when tred's dull and the "bairns" are dowie, I'm as fishonless as an ordinary cock stan'in' drookit on ae leg on a wet day. Speaking o' fairs and elections, I maun confess that the result o' the last election has gien me muckle pleasure—new bluid has been imported into the Cooncil, and I'm far mista'en if it's no' the richt sort. Sawnie Hill—Cooncillor Hill noo, I beg his pardon—is a decided acquisition to our local rulers, and ane that will dae his duty unflinchingly and uprightly. He is nane o' yer dumbie kind, for he can speak gracefully as weel as work; and whether at hame or abroad he will represent his constituents wi' dignity and credit. Some o' our Cooncillors, in bygone times, put ane in mind o' lang Frank* o' Camelon. He took a notion into his heid that he was a great musician, and insisted on getting into the Camelon band. They humoured the body, and gied him a bugle to play—*but it had a cork in't*, and blaw as he liked deil a sound cam' oot o't. The same wi' the

* Frank Carlaw by name.

Cooncillors; they thocht they were great daubs at redding the toon's affairs, but whenever they crossed the portal o' the Cooncil sanctum their gabs were steeked up for ever after. We hae nane o' thae kind noo-a-days, guid be praised; and for a simple reason—the "bairns" wadna be bathered wi' them gin they're no' up to the mark. The next election settles them, and a' their dreams o' Bailie-ships flee to the win's. "Honour to whom honour is due" is an auld and a true saying; and if some ane I ken behaves, as I believe he will, we'll see him yet in the Bailie Court a terror to evil-doers, and an honour to them that dae weel. Looking doon along the toon the last Fair day, I could hardly help remarking the wonderfu' change in the appearance o' the scene. In comparison wi' bygone fairs, it was like a strong man newly risen oot o' a fever, and I jist said to mysel', "Fa'kirk Fair, like mony ither fairs—Lourieston to wit—is gaun to the wa'." It wad be idle to describe what the fair is noo, as ilka "bairn" kens that brawly without me telling them; but the fair o' langsyne comes up before me, and I lauch to mysel' as I see their various traits and humours, dancing up and doon in memory's caupacious am'ry. Lang ere daylicht had broke the kintra lads and lassies were up and bedecking for the day's enjoyment, and sune every road for miles aroun' was throng'd wi' the sonsie chields and gaucie queens skelping in to the great centre o' attraction. By nine o'clock the High Street, frae the Red Lion to Cooncillor Hill's shop, was crammed like herrings in a barrel, wi' as curious a conglomeration o' human nature as ever met the e'e o' mortal being. The kintra bodies kept the croon o' the caus'ay, and fee'd, and fee'd, and fee'd; while rank'd alang on ilka side every description o' stands, covered wi' every human and inhuman invention, was erected to tempt the ploughman into an investment. Exactly on the spot whaur the Duke o' Wellington stands, composedly contemplating the new fashions displayed in Mr. Roberts' shop window across the street, "Auld Skebs"

erected his habby-horses, which he had cut oot o' a block o' wid wi' an axe and a gully knife, and which, barring the difficulty o' kenning their heids frae their tails, were splendid looking chargers, wi' their red, green, black, and grey colours, specially got up for the occasion. A roaring tred they drove too, during the day, and faithfully earned their keep on naething for the next six months at the back o' the Beggars' Opera. Ten or eleven o'clock, and the hale clamjamphrey was in full blast. The feeing was ower, and the inevitable dram was being discussed. Whups cracked, saws rattled, nit guns snapped in a' directions. In the centre o' an admiring crood Sconie—the original Sconie and his wife—he had a new ane every year—sang the "Queer folk o' the Shaws," or related the horrible murder which never took place. Near the Roberts' Wynd "Feed the Ravens" had commenced his wark, and aye as he held aloft his samples o' "bullock's bluid and sawdust" he discanted on their virtues wi' a racy hnmour peculiarly his ain—"Aye, my lad, ye gaed hame last nicht like a cauff, but ye'll gae hame the nicht like a Lammermuir lion." "Here's Cham'er's information for a hungry stamick," or "a railroad block hewn and ready, and maybe the wife'll get ye on to be a gauger." "Here's a loadstone, lad; tip her on the shoother wi' that, and she's catched." "Yellow's forsaken, but rose and pink is a' the fashion." Wi' sic like exclamations he sauld aff his wares in barrowfu's, amid the lauchter o' his audience. Whiles, to vary his fun he'd plunge into his muckle kist and harle oot an armfu' o' the real ginger, and, hauding them up to the gaping ravens, wud say—"Here," pointing to some stalwart hizzie in the crood, "whaever touches yon lassie's garter first gets the lot." A plunge, a roar, twa three auld women knockit ower, and the ravens are on her like a hive o' bees. Dumfooner'd at first, Jenny's helpless, but in a moment her hands and feet are cuffing and kicking in perfect desperation, while the author o' a' the mischief stands hauding his sides like to crack wi'

lauching. As the day wears on the vagaries o' the Jocks assume the most extraordinary character. Some, to gie themsel's "a deil-me-care" sort o' air, harles the snoots o' their bannets roond to their lugs, and swagger alang like a sailor aff a lang voyage. Ithers congregate roond the nit barrows and fire shot after shot at the wee ring, set up aboot three inches frae the mooth of the gun. Bull's eyes are the order o' the day, and whangs o' plum-duff and poochfu's o' nits reward the aspirants to shooting honours. Crack o' yer Taylors, yer Somervilles and yer Rosses; they are as blind as bats in comparison. Ithers patronise the wheels o' fortune, the whup and the gallows venders. In short, every sort o' stand has its ain kind o' patron, and even the bits o' laddies, fired wi' a spirit o' recklessness perfectly astonishing, order the sweetie wife to change a penny and gi'e them a bawbee's worth o' broken things. By and by the Jocks mak' a rush at their Jennys, and seize them round the neck wi' a grip that wad settle a stallion, and hauls them alang the street roaring like wud. Doon the Raberts' Wynd they flee, or else wast the toon to see the indiarubber horse, or the wild man o' the wids, or maybe Boyd's Penny Show, whar the "Floating Beacon, or the Ocean Charnel House" is served up wi' a' its accompanying horrors. I declare I almost pitied "Lang Spence," wha played the ruffian o' the piece, for he had to fa' wi' a crack on the braid o' his back, and dee a dizzen o' times in the coorse o' the day, and I was wae for "Betsy Shaw"—the kimmer that "Smoker" and "Corkie" focht aboot on the Grangemouth Road—for her cheeks were never dry lamenting the persecution she endured at the hands o' the bluidthirsty scoondrels. Jock sune tired o' this, however, and after slock'ning his drooth at the Market Inn, and buying anither package o' sweeties (throothers) for Jenny in Johnnie Stark's, doon the Raberts' Wynd they gaed wi' a daud to the Folly, whaur a hunner mair o' their kind were cutting, shuffling, and treepling

wi' their feet, and hooching, shouting, and harrooing wi' their mooths wi' sic stentorian ability that the Bulls o' Bashan, had they heard them, wad hae thocht shame to their very heart's core. O, but it was awfu' wark in the middle o' a fine spring day—the din, the crood, the stoor making the place like a perfect pandemonium. Though the swate was rinning in streams doon their faces, the lads exhibited a wonderfu' penchant for adding to their incumbrances by rowing their lassies' shawls roond their shoothers. Some o' them even exchanged bannets, to gie themselves, dootless, a picturesque appearance. Through the reel they sprang, wheeled and set to partners, and aye ere they reel'd again the hale o' them brocht doon their tackety shoon wi' sic a tremendous bang on the flair that the music was fairly drooned. A fig for yer niggers and their break-doon staps—a' the troupes in the world combined couldna produce sic a concussion—it wad be like snapping a percussion cap beside a park o' artillery. But what's up noo? Twa o' the jockies hae quarrelled aboot their relative merits in making the cleanest fun, and are trying to bluid ane anither's noses like veritable bruisers. "Ten minutes o' a rouch kitchen" prevails; the fiddles cease; the sweetie stands coupit; the lasses squeel; the men roar; the stoor's sae thick that ane hardly kens freend fae foe, and there's quite a medley o' boxing matches a' roond; while the originators o' the tulzie are dragged into a corner, and held doon by twa or three women, swearing dreedfully; though they're no' very ill to haud for a' that. Lang Pate mak's his appearance, and, as if by magic, the battle, generally a bluidless ane, comes to a termination. "Quateness is best" was Pate's favourite motto, and he seldom failed to enforce it on everybody else that misbehaved, whether they were willing or no. As the shades of evening began to fa', every dancing room, as weel's the "Folly," is crammed to suffocation wi' the dancing daft. As I look alang the toon too, I see sprinklings o' the "bairns" coming out to

see the fun. The young, baith lads and lasses, are a' clean and toshed up for the occasion; and even the auld hae gaen their faces an extra rub to mak' themselves respectable like. Many queer characters I see amang them, and I can hardly help lauching when I con ower their bit eccentricities. There's Jock Welch and his mither taking a daunder before they gang hame, and Jock looks as if he could swallow "Rockie" Downie's hale display, stand and a'. There's Geordie Puddin' clawing his back against Pate Carmichael's corner, and looking aboot in a dazed kin' o' state, as if he was'na very shair what it a' meant. A curious body was Geordie, silly a wee, but pawkie as a jailer. He had a most tremendous appetite, which, when fairly started wad hae made "Rab Ha'" turn white in the face. His regular dinner allowance was a half coorse laif and a pint o' soor dook, which he sometimes devoured in auld Sandie Wallace's, the shaemaker, at the back o' the Steeple. Sandie was kind to the body, and aften let him in to his ingle while the "num" was disappearing. Twa acquaintances o' Sandie's cam' in ae day when Geordie was dining. The last o' the repast was wearing awa' doon Craig's Close wi' wonderfu' rapidity, when the ane said to the ither, "I'll bet onything ye like that Geordie could repeat the dose." "Hoots, havers." "D'ye hear what he says, George?" "Ooi," says George. "D'ye think ye could manage anither 'coorse num' and a pint o dook?" — "Ooi," says George again, "I think sae." The extra laif and the pint o' dook was sent for, and Geordie swallowed them "stump and rump" amid the hearty laughter o' the onlookers. 4 lb. o' coorse bread and 4½ pints o' soor milk at ae diet wasna a bad dose, but it was naething oot o' the way to Geordie, wha could hae eaten the same every day had it been provided for him, There's auld Tam Jamieson, too, oot to snuff the caller air. Tam got gyin blin', puir body, as he wore up in years, and the laddies used to bother him sairly. They wad gang up to the house at nichts, when Tam, oot o' kindness o' heart, wad put on

the mickle pat fu' o' tataes to gie them some supper. During the interal o' their getting ready, Tam wad tell them some auld stories to keep them, as he thocht, from wearying. The young scoun'rels didna weary much, however, as while Tam was yarning awa' they were silently eating the tataes, and throwing the peelings back i' the pat. The stories ower, Tam wad grape aboot till he gat a fork to try whether the tataes were boilt enuch, but, waes me! naething could he find but peelings, though he scarted the pat a' roon': and then, when every laddie was hauding his mouth to keep doon the lauchter, he wad exclaim in a tone of genuine regret, "Odsake, laddies, the tataes are a' boilt to brose." But it wad tak far mair space than what Mr. Aeditor, ye wad be inclined to gi'e to tell stories o' a' the queer characters I see sauntering up and doon the street on a feeing fair, sae I'll let them alane till another opportunity. Meanwhile the fun is waxing fast and furious. The dancing is kept up with undiminished ardour till far in the morning—in fact, till "The sun through the winnocks is blinking," being diversified in a fecht noo and again, merely to gae a kin o' zest to the enjoyment. Six o'clock bell rings, and the maist o' the boddies are steering their way homeward, some of them pitifu'-looking objects atweel, wi' their bluidy noses, and heids like to split, crawling alang by the side o' the hooses, and stotting aff the han'les o' the doors, wi' the whilk they wad be inclined to quarrel if they were able; but when they stagger up against onyone, they just stan' and glower at it, making desperate efforts to collect their senses as to whether it's fechtable or no, but it's hopeless, and they stachle on again till they get hame to their hammocks—*i.e.*, the saftest place o' the flair. Thus cam to a termination the Falkirk Feeing Fair of the days gane by, and though a guid deal o' what I hae but faintly sketched be still observable in the fairs o' the present, it is but a mere bagatelle in comparison to what it was twenty or thirty years back. To use the words o' that sairly-abused poet, Byron, "'Tis Greece but leering

Greece nae mair," and the reason is neither far to seek nor ill to fin'. The spread o' education, railway trains, counteracting agencies in every direction a' tend to hasten the doonfa' o' the worn-out institution. Let it fa', sae I (though some o' the bairns may no thank me for saying sae), and everything that helps to demoralise a community. The Fair has redeeming pairts, dootless, and many a ane can look forrit to its coming wi' real pleasure; but the evil it breeds far outruns ony guid it does, and if such is the case, few will lament its speedy extinction.

I hae said sae muckle aboot the fair that I hae left mysel' little space to say a word aboot onything else. I'll change my subject in my next screed, however, aye taking it for granted that the Aeditor o' the *Herald* will gie me permission to address the bairns when the tid comes on. Meantime I'm sae muckle in the vein aboot fairs that ye maun excuse me if I wind up wi' a funny reminiscence o' anither fair, which at ae time flourished wi' a vigour and glory that promised a long and happy existence; but the green leaves o' simmer hae faded frae its broo, and the sere and yellow tint, and the speeder's wab o' time hae left it like a ruin, indicating only the place it held in the past, but which it will haud never mair.

Looking doon alang the road that leads by the "pikes" to Laurieston, I hae aften, on a bonnie simmer nicht, glowed wi' delicht at the beauty o' the scene. The long avenue o' magnificent beeches which bower the road for nearly a mile—the splendid view through the trees to the braid river reflecting the gorgeous colours o' the setting sun, combined to mak a picture that few places, if ony, in Scotland could boast o'. Oot this road lang syne, when my neb was looking eastward, I hae seen scores o' the bairns merrily trudging to the lively strains o' the auld Fa'kirk Band. D'ye mind o' the Fa'kirk Band, bairns? Hoots, ay, of coorse ye dae, as it's no sae very lang sin it dreedled oot o' existence. When the big "Pop" was burned, a hale regiment o' white uniform jackets, wi' brass epaulettes on

the shoothers o' them, followed by a wheen trumpets and bugles, was bashed ower ane o' the windows to save them frae destruction. Whether they belanged to the "auld band" or no I canna say, but the circumstance looked dreedfully suspicious as to the ignominious en' to which the band had come. Be that as it may, however, it was in a' its glory on the occasion to which I refer, and mony a merry strain it played amang the echoes o' auld Callendar as it passed on to the rendering o' fun and frolic. Arrived at the heid o' Laurieston brae, it almost got lost in the crood, wha had cam' frae far and near to see the fair, and enjoy the fun. There was to be a great horse race amang the ither sports on the programme, and everybody was on the *qui vive* for the unwonted event. Mirth and hilarity pervaded a' quarters, frae the "Gardeners' Ha'" to the "toll," till the hoor cam' roon, when, amid a biz o' excitement, Rab Shaw, mounted on a gallant cream-coloured "bung," cam' forth to dae battle for the honour o' auld Fa'kirk. His only opponent, if I mind richt, was a white "bung" frae the "Doug-house;" and as they marshalled to the starting-post loud cheers greeted the courageous warriors. The coorse was frae the "Doug-house" to the "Toll" and back; and at the signal aff they started like a whirlwind. Alang the road by the Gardeners' Ha' and the Cross Wal they flew like lichtning, Rab looking a' ower the winner. Unfortunately, however, his "bung" took a "turryvee" near the heid o' the brae, and cam' to a deid standstill, as if it had received an electric shock, and for a moment Rab remained poised between the bruit's lugs, and seemed uncertain whether he wad tak' a fleein' loup, head first, through John Broon's shop window, but Rab was ower guid a jockey to be disposed of in this way, and in anither moment he was in the saddle administering some "ribbenders" to the thawart animal. Like Paddy's pig, noo, the mair he wanted it to gang forrit, the mair it gaed back. The men roared wi' lauchter, the women squeeled, two-three weans were knockit ower, and still the "bung"

continued to back till its hinner en' gaed clean through a window, breaking chess and peens wi' a smash that could be heard half a mile awa'. By this time the white "bung" was back at the winning-post, having won the race in a canter, to the great chagrin o' the "Bairns," but to the intense delicht o' the "Lourieston bees." Mony a queer prank was played that nicht, the last I mind o' being the taking o' the drum frae the drummer at five o'clock in the morning by a wheen o' the "bairns," and "derounding" up and doun the raws waukening the folk to their day's darg. Like mony itber, and mony a better institution, Lourieston Fair has dwindled doun in the lap o' time, and when we would speer whar are they a', echo only answers whar.

From the *Falkirk Herald*, December 23, 1869.

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS O' FA'KIRK.

THIRDLY.

IT'S a grand thing a guid roaring fire, for there's aye plenty o' fun and frolic to be had while the devooring element has the upper han'—at least that has been my experience o' fires generally in and about Fa'kirk. Burn'd oot bodies wi' a hinging faple may say wi' the puddock, "What's sport to you's daith to me." But that doesna alter the fact that where'er there has been a fire in and aroon Fa'kirk there was aye a comical side till't—something that ye couldna help lauching at, though ye were sorry for the loss o' the puir bodies' property at the same time. Happily, jokes aside, Fa'kirk hasna been very aften the scene o' a fire, mair especially on a grand scale; hauf a dizzen's aboot the maist that have occurred in my time, and it's fortunate that such should be the case, or aiblins the toon, over which I hae sae lang presided, micht hae been scarted oot o' the map o' Scotland a'thegither for onything that was ever tried to put them doon. To be shair, there was the fire engine, which used to be brocht oot on the simmer mornings just to keep it in fettle, and grand it was, too, at exercise—no' anither in the warld better, as the doos which used to sit carooing below me on the Steeple window sill, kent to their cost. No ane o' them but had a richt red face wi' fricht as the stream o' water was forced up into the air like a water-spoot broken loose. It was delightfu' to witness, and I aften said to mysel' the neist fire that tak's place i' the

toon will hae sma' chance wi' yon billy; but wae's me for a cock's prediction, the neist fire, and the neist again, got leave to burn themsel' oot for ony guid the fire engine did. Generally, when a fire took place, it would come thundering up jist when it was aboot drooned oot, and had dune a' the damage it could dae, the pipe and hose were screw'd on wi' tremendous alacrity, a dizen o' sturdy "bairns" made the han'les flee like lichtning, when, whish! the pipe wad burst in hauf a dizen places a' at ance, drenching the bodies that were haudin' it up to the skin, and making them clash it frae them wi' perfect disgust. Then there was rinnin' here and there to mend and cobble, but by the time this was accomplished the fire was black oot, and the engine had to be sent hame in disgrace. Whether it was bashfu'ness in presence o' a crood, or mere thrawnness that wadna let it act, I couldna say, but certain it was that something aye gaed wrang when it was ca'd into action. I mind when Allan the farmer's hoose, in Camelon, took fire, the engine was turned out wi' great dispatch to start for the scene. A muckle cairt horse, which had been sent frae Camelon, was yok'd till't wi' rope theats, for it had nae trams, and alang the toon it flew wi' a noise like a hale fleet firing broadsides at the enemy. By the time it reached the "Croon Inn" the "bairns" were sticking till't like bees, yelling their delight in the real auld Fa'kirk fashion. Doon the brae it thunder'd, the horse galloping for bare life, in fact, for there was nae brake to regulate its velocity, and had the animal stopped a quarter o' a second it would hae been smashed into whinilstraes. The excitement was tremendous—eneuch to mak' yer hair stan on en'; but jist when it was opposite Sutherland's yett a wheel cam aff, and in a moment a score o' the bairns were describing a' sorts o' somersaults into the ditch. Crack o' high tumbling and low tumbling; they were naething ava comparison. Limited minds micht liken the catastrophe to a cairt o' coals couping; but an avalanche wad be the fitter expression, for it was

a'together dreedfu' to see in the dark o' the nicht heids, legs, and arms fleeing through the air as if they had been shot oot o' an Armstrong breech-loader. A few minutes o' dire suspense, and then ane got up—"Paisley Bob," I think it was—and feeling himsel' a' ower, said, "I'm a' richt onyway." Another followed, syne anither, till the hale o' the involuntary gymnasts were on their feet, and, wonderfu' to say, wi' the exception o' a bluidy nose here, and a contused arm or leg there, and wi' mooths and een fu' o' "glàur," generally nane o' them was the waur o' the disaster. Hauf an hoor was spent in fixing on the wheel, and, as usual, when the engine arrived in Camelon the flames had licked up everything worth licking. The hoose was completely gutted, and some fine milk kye were lying deid in the back yaird. The engine must dae something, hooever, and sae a bairn, noo in America, fixed on the hose, and scooted at the nailers, wha were throwing stoupfu's o' water frae the taps o' the wa's on the smoking embers. To dae the engine justice, it whiles wrocht no that ill when fairly han'led. At the fire in the big "Pop," for instance, it did wonderfu' execution, and sune drooned oot the devouring element. There were lots o' ither elements there that morning, and it couldna droon them oot though, for they stuck to their wark like bees to a honey caim. Lang after the fire was quenched, these elements bash'd ower guids o' a' description, frae a looking-glass to a brass bugle, into the Kirk Wynd, till it was completely blocked up, then they had a quate survey o' the premises to see if they could fa' in wi' ony thing eatable or drinkable, for it was dreedfu' warm wark, and some o' their tongues stuck to the roof o' their mooths like a Queen's-heid to an envelope. At last one o' the elements discovered—O, glorious sicht!—a hauf-dizzen basket fu' o' bottles o' whisky. He pounced on the treasure as an Arab wad dae on a desert wal', and held it aloft in triumph. An enraptured cheer frae the drouthy throats o' the ither elements greeted his appearance. They escorted

him to the inner chamber like a Roman emperor aff a roon' o' victories; and when anither o' the elements produced a half cheese, the enthusiasm was unbounded. Doon they sat on their hunkers in a ring and got ready for action, and it was bonnie to see the pleasant smiles on their faces, and to hear hoo kindly they spake to ane anither. It was,

"Warm wark, this, Sam; a body will be nane the waur o' a bit drap. He! he!"—a hysterical giggle accompanying the remark.

"Very warm, atweel," responded Sam, dichting his mouth wi' the sleeve o' his sark.

"Wha'd hae thocht that Ward wad keep sic a stock beside him," says Tam, his fishy een devooring the stock in question, basket an' a'.

"Wonderfu'! Knock the heid aff the bottle, Jock. What are ye fumling at," was the next impatient exclamation, and aff gaed the heid in a twinkling, the operator taking a hearty swig at the liquor. He made a dreedfu' wry face, but said naething; indeed, he had hardly time, as the bottle was trailed oot o' his hand, and the neck o't plunged into the gullet o' his neebor withoot ceremony. In a moment the bottle was bash'd on the flair, a prolonged yell echo'd through the building, and "I'm pishoned! I'm pishoned! I'm pishoned!" roared the scarified drinker. The elements crooded roond him, speering what was the matter. "Taste it! taste it! taste it! fech! abominable! horrible!" gasped the unhappy individual. And taste they did, and diskivered to their cruel disappointment that the liquor was'na whisky ava, but *cold, clear-drawn castor oil.* The swearing was something dreadfu' to hear, but it didna last lang, for when the elements emerged to the licht o' day there was a contented smile on their faces, and somehoo or ither they contrived to gang on the batter for a week, as a kind o' self-reward for their meritorious services.

I hae been led to speak o' fires through seeing a bleeze the ither nicht, which promised fair, if it had been let

alane for a wee, to become a conflagration of magnificent proportions. I was looking north ower the taps o' the guid auld Earl's trees when the lowe shot up, and I said to mysel' there's the petroleum at last. Wae's me for the Port; it's doomed to destruction noo. Luckily, as it turned out, it wasna the petroleum, but a ship; and though that was bad eneuch wi' a' conscience, mair especially as a fellow crater was sent to his lang hame, it was but a flee-bite in comparison to what it wad hae been had the oil caught fire: we wad have had a second edition o' the fire o' London, and by this time the Port, like anither Carthage, wad hae disappeared frae the site o' its glory. I understand human nature ordinary weel, at least as weel as could be expected frae a common "Cochin China," but there is ae thing I could never fathom at a', and that was hoo the folk o' Grangemouth allow'd themsel's to be knockit ower and trampled on by Dividend & Co., wha, if they could hae screwed their sax and a hauf per cent oot o' their concern in the Port, didna care twa raps gin the hale community were doon the Carron. I used to hae a great wark wi' the bodies o' the Port, and I lo'e them still as dearly as the bairns o' my ain auld toon; but I confess I was like to lose my temper wi' them whiles, and my birse got up when I thocht hoo patiently they bore a' the rebuffs o' the aforesaid firm. They build new ships and braw ships, and push aboot in business wi' unequalled activity; they seize haud o' every modern improvement; they incorporate every agency likely to be of service to the community, view them frae any airt ye like; they are energetic and frank as weel; and I'll defy the warld to bate them in aff-handed kindness o' heart; but wi' a' their qualifications there's ae thing they could never dae—they could never move Messrs. Dividend ae peg except when it suited their sovereign convenience. Thoosands o' pounds micht be harled oot o' the Port year after year, but as for gaeing ony discount back in the shape o' remedying auld sairs,

that was an item that never appeared in the half-yearly report. Na, na, that wasna to be thocht o' for a moment. Folk micht be drooned, folk micht be burned—what aboot that? Sax and a hauf was a wonderfu' sa' for trifles o' that description. I declare I have fand my bluid boiling to see hoo things were carried on in Grangemouth by parties whose sole interest in the place was to tak' everything oot o't they could at the sma'est possible expense. In the hale o' Great Britain, I'll venture to say, there wasna a port doing the same amount o' business managed at sae sma' a cost—and why? Because in ither ports the officials are paid a fair day's wage. The works are kept in a fair state o' repair, and if ony untoward event tak's place imperilling the safety o' the public, steps are immediately taken to prevent its repetition. But can ony ane say that such has been the case in Grangemouth? Certainly no. I hae seen a fine young man walk ower the wast breist o' the auld dock on a dark nicht to his death, when a bit chain placed a few yards back wad hae prevented him. I see anither fa' into sea lock, and when the life-buoy that hings, or used to hing, at Pate Kincaid's box was thrown doon to him, it flew into poother, and the man was drooned. And I mind o' a third that tumbled into the same slough o' despond, and when a chield had got haud o' him wi' a boat-hook, there wasna a bit o' rope, nor a ladder, nor any appliance whatever to bring the unfortunate individual up to *terra firma;* and he micht hae been there yet had a ship no been near at hand, frae which a rope was procured. But why multiply instances? Isn't it a fact that scarcely a week passes without some unfortunate losing his life? I dinna mean to say that the loss o' every life micht be prevented in Grangemouth; that would be almost impossible; but a great many could, if only ordinary measures for safety were adopted. Doesn't it seem ridiculous that only one watchman was employed to watch the whole docks during the nicht, and in addition to that, to keep a look-out for

steamers up, and rowst the lockmen? Doesn't it seem scandalous that a lock, ower which the hale foot traffic o' the Port daily and nichtly travels, shouldna hae had a bit rape or chain roond it to keep unwary strangers frae fa'ing to the bottom? and doesn't it seem queer, to say the least, that aroond a' the docks or harbour there wasna a ladder, a stair, a rope, or apparatus o' ony kind to save a drooning man? Na, ance in, and whether he could soom or no', doon he gaed, like a mouse in a basin. A Carron screw or the creepie turned him up twa three days afterwards. A *post mortem* was held ower his remains, and then he was never heard o' mair.

And are matters ony better in the Port noo? No ae whit. When the amalgamation o' Dividend & Co. wi the Caledonian Railway Company took place, folk lookit forrit wi' great glee in the expectation o' mony changes for the better; but their houps hae been doomed to disappointment, for a' the auld e'e sairs remain in full force, and the only alterations in the aspect o' things generally hae been for the waur. Formerly, and presently, too, for that matter, the bodies o' the Port could sing wi' great justice,

"Water, water, everywhere,
And not a drop to drink."

Noo they micht also add with the laddie at the schule, when, in making a bargain, they invoke a' kind o' evil on their fellow in case o' swindle, and amang the rest,

"Fire aboon ye,
Fire ablow ye,
And fire on every side o' ye"

And such promises fairly to be the condition o' the Port, for on a' sides petroleum casks, fu' o' the inflammable liquor, are as plentiful as blackberries, and are landed, shipped, or trucked wi' as little thocht or care as if they were bars o' pig iron. There'll be a bonnie bleeze some day if some steps are not taken to restrict the traffic, or at

least to adopt such measures as may seem proper for the safety o' the community. Hoo this is to be set aboot is no for me to say. There are those wi' pens much sharper than mine, who dinna neglect the interests o' the Port, as the columns o' the *Falkirk Herald* can testify, and likely they'll point oot the way by-and-bye; but I micht throw oot a suggestion which, if carried oot, wad be of great service to the Port in the event of the dire contingency hinted at. As an auld freen o' mine remarked when he proposed to redress the land grievance o' Ireland by gaeing a' the inhabitants o' that kintry spades, and wha dug maist grund wad get maist. It'll hae, at least, the merit o' novelty. I wad suggest, then, that a shooer-bath on a scale sae large that it wad tak' in the hale Port should be immediately erected. Sandie Tamson and Johnnie Fairlie maybe wad provide the tim'er at cost price, and Willie Dawson wad shairly gie ane o' his dams at Carron to fill the cistern when aince it was up. A man, Tam Clark, for instance—a handy sort o' body—could be appointed to stand by the rape, and whenever the blow-up took place, haul awa' like winking, and droon oot the conflagration. Of course, in drooning oot the fire there wad be a danger o' drooning the Port, too; but I'm shair the bodies wad far rather prefer to be droon'd than burned, mair especially as they are sae muckle accustomed to that way o' getting oot o' the world. I ken fine that some sagacious individuals will say the hale thing's outrageous, but after a' it doesna seem mair ootrageous that the idea o' Grangemouth ever getting justice frae the Forth and Clyde Canal Company, or, richtly speaking, their Caledonian amalgamators. Frae ae extreme to anither—frae heat to cauld—is a transition of easy accomplishment to a cock like me, whirling aboot as I am every day a' the airts o' the compass. I need nae apology, therefore, gin I refer at ance to the scene I saw on Callendar Loch the ither day, where the bairns were at it teeth and nail sooping up, yearking oot, and

roaring like wind. It reminded me o' auld times, and my heart gat sic a heeze that I scarted a song oot o' my heid on the subject. And it's a gy'in guid ane o' its kind. Maybe my auld freend, John Beeby, will tak' doon his fiddle and set it to music. I dinna like to dictate as to what sort o' air it should hae, but gin he wad mak' the chorus resemble a drove o' stots coming ower Bainsford Brig frae the Tryst, the effect wad be simply magnificent. But he'll ken best. Here's the song:—

A CURLER'S SONG.

Sing the glorious game o' curling,
 Kingly winter, stere and snell,
Flick'ring snawdrifts, wildly swurling,
 Theeking upland, mead, and dell.
Icebound loch, and dam, and basin,
 Streamlets hushed wi' magic charm,
Nor'land breezes, biting, bracin',
 Cheering heart and nerving arm.

CHORUS—

Sing the rink, the rings, the pat-lid,
 Hogscore, mid-line, bankit snaw;
Stanes and han'les, cowe and crampet,
 Bonspiels famous, sing them a'!

Up my lads, the day is blinking
 Ower auld "Tintoc's" ruggit broo,
Ne'er a second ca', I'm thinking,
 Needs a curler, keen and true.
Soop the rings and rink, be ready,
 And uphaud the fame we've won;
To your post, my hearties, steady—
 Boom! hurrah! the spiel's begun!

Finely flaired, my gallant Johnnie,
  Straucht's the ettle o' yer e'e,
Dinna soop—She's coming bonnie,
  Thank ye, lad, she's on the tee.
Gaird noo, guidsake, dinna hog 'er,
  Weel dune, Jock, the "lintie's" there,
Ne'er was winner "happit" snugger,
  Mortal man could dae nae mair.

Here's a "kittle jaud," her shoother
  Rub fu' canny, dinna flee—
Jist the sma'est pinch o' poother,
  For the ice is thrawn a wee.
Soop her up, she has it fairly.
  Saw ye e'er sic matchless play?
Lads, they'll hae to wauken early,
  Ere they win frae us the day.

"Yerk" them oot, noo, fricht creation,
  Soop, and cangle beard to beard,
Scatter roaring desolation,
  Snawing "winner," "weke," and "gaird."
Gi'e them "heels," lay on the hammer—
  Swiftly speed the fleeting hoors;
Sune we'll shout aboon the clamour,
  Hip! hurrah! the medal's oors!

Tell me not o' gouf or cricket,
  Deeper pleasure curlers know;
Frozen waters—that's yer ticket—
  Set a curler's heart aglow.
Hae ye trouble? hae ye sorrow?
  Are ye pinched wi' warldly care?
"Redd" the roaring rink to-morrow—
  Peuch! they'll fash ye never mair.

Here's to curlers, then (and curling),
Plenty reign whare'er they be,
Pith to dear auld cronies' hurling,
Dowgs o' war frae tee to tee.
Three times three for Sandie Cassels,
Dauntless chief o' mony a fray ;
May ye aye—his willing vassals—
Hear his orders, and obey.

CHORUS—Sing, etc.

Dublin. EXILE.

(From the *Falkirk Herald*, January 22nd, 1870.)

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

New'er's-Day Notes.

Twal' o'clock! Rap, tap, tap!

"Wha's there?"
"It's me!"
"Wha's you?"
"Hoots, ye ken Jock Tamson."
"And wha's wi' ye?"
"Only Wull Bauchop."
(A whisper'd consultation inside.)

"Will I let them in, Tam? It's Meg Robieson's auldest son, Jock, and a neebor; they've baith guid feet; they're no plain onyway; will I let them in?"

"Let them in to be shair," says Tam, the guidman, frae ahint the curtains.

The guidwife accordingly, after chapping up the gethering coal and unsweeling a row o' flannen frae her chaffs, and throwing on an extra petticoat, unbars the door.

"A guid new-year to ye, Mrs. Tosh! A guid new-year to ye, Tam!"

"The same to you, Jock, and mony o' them; o'd but I'm blithe to see ye Rise, Tam, and draw on ye're breeks; here's Jock Tamson and Wull Bauchop come to be oor first-fit." (As if Tam didna ken that brawly.)

Tam gets up, and then Jock Tamson proceeds to haul oot o' his jacket pooch a muckle black bottle fu' o' the

rale Glenleevit, fills up the glass handed to him by the guidwife, and hands it back again, ejaculating—

"Here, guidwife, drink! the leddies first, ye ken."

"Ye're health. Jock; yours, Wull; and a guid new-year to ye baith. My sang, what great muckle fallows ye've grown! Hoo's yer mither, Jock? (A bit seep.) Guyless! That's richt; she's wearing doon the hill like mysel. (Anither bit seep, wi' her han' below the glass in case o' ony scaling.) But we've seen the day. She was neebor wi' me, ye ken, Jock, up at Windy-yetts, and twa strappiner kimmers ye wadna hae seen on a day's travel." (A moothfu', wi' an indication o' handing the glass back.)

"Toots, tak it oot, Mrs. Tosh; nane o' ye're hauf anes; dinna mak twa bites o' a cherry; coup it up, it'll dae ye nae ull; mind it's new'er-day morning."

Mrs Tosh makes a wry face (a' a pretence), and coups up the liquor, wi' a sidelin' glint at Tam to see hoo he relishes the operation. Tam, hooever, is ower intent on the contemplation o' his ain awmus, which he receives wi' a pleasant smile, and after nodding the usual salutations, pops hauf o't ower his throat at ance, off'ring the ither hauf back (a' a pretence again), but is easily prevailed upon to whup it aff. Wull Bauchop gangs through nearly the same sort o' pantomime wi' *his* bottle; the auld wife's tongue being a kennin' mair soluble, which draws doon the wrath o' the auld man, who canna be bather'd wi' her havers, especially as his drooth's hardly slocken'd to his satisfaction, and the drink's lang o' coming roon'. Jock noo tak's a drap oot o' his ain bottle and a drap oot o' Wull's, an example which Wull closely imitates, whereupon Mrs Tosh gangs to the cupboard and brings oot *her* bottle, and a claut o' curran' laif (which Tam had trysted frae the baking society nearly a month previous); and after they had gaen *their* roon's, the ceremony was complete; Jock Tamson being Mrs. Tosh's first fit to a' ends and purposes for weel or for woe.

There, bairns! there's a sample o' the way New'er-day was brocht in langsyne, no here and there only as it is noo, but in almost every house in the parish. I've seen mysel' deaf for nearly a week wi' the noise occasioned by rapping at doors and winnocks on a New'er's-day morning, while the howls and yells—sangs they ca'd them—which intermingled, raised sic a confoonded hullabilloo as micht hae waukened the inmates o' Johnny Carr's orchard. Mony a queer cantrip hae I seen frae the Steeple tap on a New'er's-day morning; and mony a time could I hae lauched till my sides were sair (if that were possible to a cock) at the recollection o' the funny capers some o' the bairns cut under the inspiring influence of John Barleycorn. It wad hardly dae, hooever, to exhume deed scandals, and its aye best to let sleeping dougs lie, especially if they bite as weel as bark; but there can be nae harm in raking oot o' memory's weel-stored girnal some pleasant recollections o' the past, not only by way o' illustrating hoo the bairns enjoyed themsel's on a New-year's-day, but also in the houp, maybe, o' bringing up a lauch to the bairns o' the present time, wha, guid help them, are dull enuch in these lang, dark nichts, seeing they have only the occasional Schule o' Airts lecture to relieve them frae the dreedfu' monotony.

The morning broke wi' a sunny blink, the air was keen and snell, and had an invigorating breeze aboot it that made the auldest forget his troubles. The roads were as hard as nails, Carron Dams, the Loch, and the Leddie's Cut were bearing, and in fine fettle for skitching or the roaring game. It was the first day o' the year auchteen-hunn'er and fifty—weel there's nae use o' being ower particular—and as I look'd doon frae my perch I could see the "bairns" greeting ane anither wi' a heartiness that wad hae been impossible had the weather been drumlie. Occasionally I couldna help nech'ring as I espied some veteran toper graping his way hame after his first-fitting. Some o' them strutted alang on their heels wi' their een fixed

on the mark for which they steer'd, and frae which they durstna deviate an inch in case o' couping; ithers again ran a wee bit wi' their heids doon, recovered their balance as if by a miracle, swayed back to the very point o' their heels, till, in fact, it was heids or tails whether they gaed clean ower a'thegether or no, but doon gaed their heids again, in the very nick o' time, and aff they ran, repeating the wonderfu' performance a' the way hame. The sensible-drunk kind snoored oot o' closes and alang by the sides o' the hooses, dauding their shoothers occasionally aff the door posts, but though the dunts were hard enough, they never let on; catch them, they were ower wide awake for that. It wadna dae to let onybody see that *they* were the waur o' the drap; but when some acquaintance met and accosted them wi' the usual kindly "Guid New-Year to ye," they only glowered wi' their bluid-shot een and hiccup'd oot their secret after a'. Mair o' them, hooever, brazen'd it oot, and bauldly staggered alang the street wi' the neck o' a bottle sticking oot o' their pooches, singing, in general cases, "Auld Langsyne"—they had been singing the same sang a' morning--and, like the drink, they couldna get it oot o' their heids. Lastly, Jamie M'Nee was describing ane o' his cuts on his left heel at the fit o' the Coo Wynd, invoking, at the same time, blessings on the heid o' Mr. Salmon* because his namesake was the best fish that sooms in the sea; while "Kirkintilloch Jamie" was lying drunk in the gitter no far off, singing "Auld Hunn'er" (Jamie's favourite when he was fou") to a crood of weans. Such were some o' the sichts that cam athwart my view that New'er-day morning, and such sichts, I am sorry to say, were plentifu' enuch the last ane, and are likely to be sae as long as whuskey sells at saxpence a gill. In spite o' every effort to reform the national vice, it seems to me to be as rampant as ever. Oor forefaithers used to judge a man's qualifications by the number o'

* Then Agent for the Falkirk branch of the Commercial Bank.

drams he could put under his belt. And we've a' heard the story o' Lord Hermand, wha, in trying a case of murder, exclaimed, to the plea urged in extenuation that the man was drunk when he committed the crime, "Weel, if he could commit a murder when he was drunk, what wad he no dae gin he were sober." Such ideas, however, are no at a popular noo-a-days; and when a man sae far forgets himsel' as to fill himsel' drunk, his character gets sic a bash as tak's a guy lang time to put straucht again. The auld Hieland minister's advice to tak' a dram, but no to be aye dram, dramming, may be guid eneuch to some folk, but to the kind that mak' bruits o' themsel's at every opportunity, nane at a' is the best to put into practice if they hae the sma'est wish to win the respeck o' their fallows in this world, and the pardoning mercy o' their Creator in the next. But what am I havering at? I'm awa frae my subject like a ship frae her anchors in an ebb-tide. As I said, the morning was ane amang a hun'er, and exactly at nine o'clock the Fa'kirk Band mustered in full force at Johnnie Mason's, Cross Keys, for it had been determined to hae a march oot into the kintry, not only by way of practice, but wi' the view, doubtless o' gieing the natives a tick o' maisic they were nae muckle accustomed to, for, mind ye, the Fa'kirk Band were nae sma' drink in thae days. They could rout and blaw wi' the best in a' the land. At the first bung o' the big drum the "bairns" cam' fleeing doon closes in scores, and when Willie Tamson gaed his ane, twa, three, and aff ye go, a perfect army stapped out in front, wi' military precision, to the inspiring air o' "Wha wadna fecht for Charlie?" Doon the East Port they marched, amid the cheers o' coontless weans and wives—the latter wi' dirty mutches on their heids; and the uproarious rejoicing o' Wullie Tibbie, wha was stannin' at auld Tammas Callander's corner, held by the scruff o' the neck by his mither, Gaping Tibbie, as he exhibited a strong disposition to join the procession. Oot past "Marion's Wall" they

trampit, and as I looked doon alang the ranks, I couldna help remarking to mysel'—"Certie, ye're won'erfu weel pickit." They were indeed weel pickit, for a better sample o' the fun and frolic loving "bairns" never left the toon for a day's enjoyment. Alang through the trees, and up the Back Raw o' Lourieston they held their way, the band a' the time playing every lively air they could think o'; and when they ceased playing a few minutes, through sheer want o' breath, a vocal band took their place, and sang a' sort o' sangs wi' choruses, thunder'd forth wi' sic vigour that the folk in the hooses on the road cam' fleein' oot, under the idea that the French were landed at last. When the sangs failed them, they ran races—they improvised jumping matches—they tauld stories—and pledged ilk ither frae their half-toom bottles. Every public-hoose they cam' to they charged for mair drink to keep up the steam, and the steam was kept up to sic a pressure that the order o' march began to assume raither a straggling appearance. Nearing Borrowstounness, hoo-ever, Willie Cooper, ane o' the best cornet players in the shire, soonded the reca', and studying themsel's as weel as they could, they formed themsel's into ranks, twal deep, and to a fine auld air, the chorus o' which was

"Whack, row, de dow, dow, fal, lal, do, do, a duddy,"

they marched into the toon—the band playing the air only, while the "bairns" sang the chorus wi' sic grand effect that the toon bodies turned oot *en masse* to welcome the illustrious strangers. Opposite the "Toon Ha'" they formed into a circle, and the band played ane o' its best airs, reserved for special occasions, after which they dispersed to slocken the drouth that clung to them whare'er they gaed. Some o' them patronised the "Green Tree," ithers the "Douglas," but the greater portion landed in Jock Dunlop's big room, whar, after they had breed and cheese and plenty o' beer to wash it doon, wi' aiblins a bit drap o' Vannan's maut, according to taste, the band struck up

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a reel, and in a moment the hale clamjamphrey were fittin' it tae and heel wi' unbounded delicht. A regular bull reel it was and nae mistak'; nane o' yer paddy bass's or skliffin' shuffles, but a hearty thump wi' a hunner tackety boots a' at ance shook the fluiring o' Jock's inn that morning, accompanied by as mony hoochs as wad hae frichtet a drove o' Hielan' stots to daith. For nearly an 'oor the fun continued, and then the order to march was soonded, and up the hill to 'Lithgow they trudged like lions refreshed. Arrived at the Wast Port o' that ancient and famous city, they again formed twal deep and marched up tae the Cross tae the air o' "The Penter Laddie," and the chorus aforesaid, creating, as they did, sic a profoond impression on the snobs and curriers that loonged aboot the close mooths. At the Cross the band played a choice selection to the unmitigated disgust o' the toon's whustle band, wha, in groops o' threes and fours, dauner'd up and doon wi' their white breeks on and their bits o' whustles sticking oot o' their pooches. It was a splendid day, and the frost being keen, the "bairns" sune raised a slide that extended a' the way frae the Toon Ha' to the Causey; at it they gaed as hard's they could bicker, till they looked like a string o' geese on their way to the water. There was an ugly sheuch at the side o' the street, whar at last ane o' the "bairns" coupit, and the next that cam' fell ower him, the next and the next followed suit till they were piled up as high as a cart o' hay. It was a sair faught to get the bottom ane oot, and it was a mercy nae banes were broken; but sae it was, for, saving a bluidy nose here and there, nae damage was done. It put a stop to the sliding and wauken'd the drooth again, sae they adjourned to a public-hoose in the Square, and got a sa' to hale a' corns. Amang the company some 'Lithgow acquaintances were very conspicuous, and ane o' them, an auld man wi' a white pow, a won'erfu' han' at speechifying, as maist o' the 'Lithgow bodies are, got up to propose a toast. He didna ken wha he was dailing wi', or he wad

hae thocht twice before he ventured on sic a coorse. The "bairns," some o' whom were weel on by this time, filled their glasses, hooever, and then wi' a flourish the carle said — Fellow-craturs. (Cheers.) Fellow-craturs. (Renewed cheers.) If ye'll let me speak, fellow-craturs, I'll gie a toast. (Hear, hear, and a voice—Speak up, guidman.) The toast I'm gaun to gie is ane which I'm shair will meet wi' the greatest cordial approval o' this respectable company. (Great cheering at the word respectable, and cries o' "Ye're richt, guidman; what is't? Oot wi't.") The toast, fellow-craturs—looking roond the expectant hearers wi' a gracious smile—is Britherly Luve. (Tremendous cheering, amid which the lassie comes in and says if they're no quater they'll need to gae oot.) When Cain, fellow-craturs, nicket the craig o' Abel wi' his gully-knife—(sensation)—he inaugurated an era that has brocht mony woes on the warld at lairge. But the main point is, was it a gully-knife that did the trick? (A dubious voice, Question.) Weel, I think we have indisputable evidence as to the fact, for Rabbie Burns says it was. (Enthusiastic cheering, the audience rising simultaneously and singing "Auld Lang Syne," wi' poker and tangs accompaniment.) But, fellow-craturs, though Cain gied us an ill example, that's no to say we're to follow it. Na, na, we're bound to extend the han' o' freendship to ilk ither as we toddle through the warld—(cheers, and a voice, "Bring anither gill, lassie, for I'm choking")—and to help ane anither kindly ower the dubs that beset life's journey. Here's britherly luve, then, and I houp the day's no far distant when, in spite o' cankers and cares, we'll see, as Rabbie Burns says, fellow-craturs, the realization o' that noble and immortal condition o' things—

"Man to man the warld ower,
Brithers be for a' that."

(Terrific cheering, accompanied by an impromptu reel roond the table, in which hauf-a-dizen o' glasses were

knockit ower and smashed, and as hastily picked up again, and their hale sides placed fornent the door, so that the landlady wouldna notice them till the company left.) The hubbub subsided, mony toasts were drunk, and sangs sung by the company wi' great hilarity. Here's ane that *wasna* sung on that occasion, but it's nane the waur o' that, and dootless it will henceforth be a valuable addition to the lyric poetry o' 'Lithgow.

THE LASS O' 'LITHGOW TOON.

O weary lags the nicht that brings the trysted hour sae near,
And wildly beats this heart o' mine wi' love, and hope, and
    fear;
My thochts are like a stormy sea that winna settle doon,
But surges ever up to view the Lass o' 'Lithgow Toon.

The day ower grey Ben Lomond's tap has faded in the west,
And bonnie simmer blossomings hae sank in dewy rest;
While charmingly the mavis sings, the am'rous, pawky loon,
And I maun up the bank to meet the Lass o' 'Lithgow Toon.

Sweet fancy, on her weirdly wing, is soaring wild and hie,
And waukens gowden dreams o' bliss in future store for me;
Oh! happy lot, a bielded cot, sweet floorets blooming roon',
Wi' earth's entrancing, sweetest fair—the Lass o' 'Lithgow
    Toon.

I see her face, her bonnie face, in morning's sunny gleam,
I hear her laughter ringing in the ripple o' the stream;
The sunset o' a simmer's day, when gowden cloods surroon',
Reflects the tresses that adorn the Lass o' 'Lithgow Toon.

Saftly gloaming shadows fa' on wildwood, glen, and hill,
And whisp'ring breezes mingle wi' the brattle o' the rill;
The droosy warld to sleep has gane, and laid her labours doon,
As 'lane I wait the coming o' the Lass o' 'Lithgow Toon.

Hush !—'tis a stap, a lichtsome stap—a stap among a score ;
She's ower the brig—she's in my arms—the lassie I adore ;
My heid gaes roon, by sun and moon I wadna hae a croon,
For this, and this—anither kiss, my Lass o' 'Lithgow Toon.

There, ye scions o' the Black Bitch and ben leather, there's a sang that even my auld freend, Mr Waldie, wi' a' his research, never discovered—sae muckle the better, quo' I —and if yer Provost wad tak' an advice, he micht dae waur than mak' a' the members o' his Cooncil learn it aff by heart, and whenever ane o' them gat obstrepulus, and was inclined to mak' lang speeches, he micht mak' them sing it first, not only for the pleasure o' the Cooncil, but for the edification o' the burgh at lairge. But I'm wandering again. The "bairns," after enjoying themsel's to their hearts' content, cam' oot jist in time to catch the train to Fa'kirk, whar they arrived safe and soun' at aucht o'clock at nicht, and hieing to Johnnie Mason's, they danced till four o'clock in the morning to the enlivening strains of Jock Johnston's fiddle band, and there fittingly wound up a New-Year's Day o' nae ordinary character, and ane to be remembered wi' pleasure amid life's tribulations, whether present or in store.

(From the *Falktrk Herald*, February 5, 1870.)

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

By Way o' Variation.

Hoo Tam Todd becam' a Teetotaller and a Member o' the Caledonian Provident Society.

Few, if ony, o' the "bairns," I doot, ken Tam Todd, or hoo he became a teetotaller, and a member o' the Caledonian Provident Society.

Wad ye like to hear? Yes. Weel I'll tell ye.

But first let me gi'e ye an inkling as to Tam's belangings—a bit short glint at his early history—merely to let you ken wha he was, and what he was, wi' a bit swatch o' his courtship to the bargain, details that'll be fand no athegither devoid o' interest.

Tam was born and brocht up in a sma' seaport toon on the East Coast o' Scotland, no a hundred miles frae auld Fa'kirk. He was an orphan, for his faither had been lost at sea in ane o' the vessels trading to the Port, and his mither took his daith sae muckle to heart, that though she struggled on for a year or twa, and a sair han'-to-mouth struggle it was, she fever'd at last, and in a short time her weary head was laid at rest aneath the gowans o' the auld kirk-yaird. Tam was ower young to mind the loss he had sustained very lang. He was naturally of a sanguine disposition, and though he bubbled and grat for a wee while, he was sune playing at bools or dozing peeries wi' his cronies wi' as little thocht and care as gin' naething had happen'd. His hame, noo, was wi' his auld granny, by his mither's side, wha, puir and hardup though

she was, managed to scrape thegether as muckle as gi'e him a cog o' parritch and a crust o' breed. Nay, better still, when Tam was auld eneuch, and had, through the kindly interest o' his faither's late employer, received a kenning o' reading and writing at the parish schule, she contrived to get him into a tred, and to keep him at it during the first years of his 'prenticeship, when his wages were sma' and no heavy to carry hame atweel. As time gaed by his wages increased, and ere his guid auld granny had closed her een in this warld, they were leeving in a state o' comfort beyond their fondest anticipations. When his time was oot, and his granny lying beside her dochter, Tam, like mony anither cuif, began to snoak after the lassies wi' the view o' getting some ane to spend his wages for him and keep him in het water for the rest o' his life. He was alane in the warld, having neither kith nor kin to speer hoo he was getting on, or say an encouraging word. No that he cared muckle aboot that, he was young and strong, and had a capital tred on his finger en's, and there was mony a kimmer neither far to seek nor ill to fin' girning to get haud o' him, and wad hae jumped at his offer lik' a doug at a lump o' fat pork. Mischanter tak' it, hooever, as is often the case, the very ane he wanted wad hae naething tae dae wi' him ava, at least she pretended sae; for when she was jibed aboot him she cuist up the point o' her nose, which was a wee cock onyway, like a grumphie snuffin' the wind wi' a shoo'er at the tail o't. Leezie M'Tansh was her name, and a brawer hizzie, tak' her a' through, never bother'd the brains o' a feckless mortal. She was wearing oot the last months o' her teens, and was nearly as tall as Tam himsel'. She had a stap a yaird long, and her face was the very picture o' health and comeliness. The twa best features in't, withoot doot, were her mooth and her een. The sicht o' the former, wi' its rosy lips, and the white teeth keeking through every time she lauch'd – and she lauch'd as often as she could—whiles drave Tam hauf

daft wi' envy, while the roguish glances she shot out frae aneath the lashes o' the latter knockit the stamick oot o' him athegither; and though he has actually sworn a score o' times to hae nae mair fash wi' her, ae look settled him and scattered a' his vows to the winds. He was completely in the net, ower lugs and ears, and, like a rabbit link, the mair he wriggled to get out the firmer it gat. Brawly Leezie kent this, but though, truth to tell, she had a bit warm corner in her heart for Tam, she never let on—the graceless gipsy—but flirted wi' this ane and danced wi' that ane, and never jee'd her beaver. Whiles at nichts, when she met him up at the wall at Broomy Knowe—which Tam haunted like a ghaist—she wad gi'e him ane o' her kindest looks, and say it's a bonnie nicht, Tam, and maybe haver for hauf an hoor aboot the clash o' the toon, sending him hame wi' his bannet cockit on three hairs, and his heart thumping in his breist wi' perfect delicht; at ither times when they forgather'd she wad only gi'e him a dry nod, and wadna stay a minute, plunging the cuif ance mair into black despair. This kin o' wark couldna last muckle langer withoot showing its effect, and it didna; for Tammas grew thin and shilpit, and no like himsel' ava. He gaed frae his parritch in the morning, and mony a day when his kail was laid down to his dinner he only sat and glower'd at them, seeing Leezie's mooth and een in every lump o' cabbage and barley pickle. At nicht he took to wandering awa' by himsel', leaving his cronies to gouf or cricket, as they had a mind; and after he cam' hame he sat up to a' 'oors writing screeds o' poetry a' aboot Leezie. He sent his efforts in the poetic line thick and threefauld to the aeditur o' the *Herald*, and though they never got a place in the poet's corner, he was quite uplifted when he saw, at last, among the notices to correspondents, that T. T.'s last production was very good, but scarcely up to the mark, and telling him to "try again," and try again he did; and again till't, wi' unflagging zeal, till the aeditur

took pity on him, and ae morning when he got the paper, and turned to the precious corner, as he aye did the first thing, there was his "Lines to Leezie," in black and white, staring him in the face. He could scarcely believe his een; and it wasna till he had read it hauf-a-dizzen o' times ower frae beginning to end, that a sigh o' satisfaction relieved his pent-up feelings. He was a poet at last; and in his ain imagination the "Poet-Laureate" himsel' was only a tippenny rhymer in comparison. The "Lines to Leezie" were really grand, and I didna see why ye shouldna hae a sight o' them, especially as they won him sae muckle fame, and a wife in the bargain. Here they are, and they wad melt the heart o' a wheelbarrow:—

O Leezie is the brawest lass
  That ever I did see;
Her comely form nane can surpass,
  And sparkling is her e'e.
I lo'e her better far than goud:
  But aft she tak's the gee,
And gangs her by, wi' heid fu' high,
  And plagues the life o' me.

O Leezie! Leezie!
  Dinna, dinna teaze me!
I wad dee to please ye,
  Bonnie Leezie, Leezie!

Her brow is like the drifted snaw,
  Her hair is black as coal;
But oh! for me her luve is sma',
  And unco ill to thole.
I wander east, I wander wast,
  Wi' weary, weary feet;
And when I dree her scornfu' e'e,
  I jist sit doon and greet.

O Leezie! Leezie!
Dinna, dinna teaze me!
I wad dee to please ye,
Bonnie Leezie, Leezie!

Her lips are like twa roses rare,
Or rubies without price;
And I wad a' my wages ware
To pree them ance or twice.
But wae's me, Tam, I doot, I doot,
Sic bless will ne'er be thine;
Yet while I loup, I'll ne'er lose houp
O Leezie being mine.

O! Leezie, Leezie,
Dinna, dinna teaze me,
I wad dee to please ye,
Bonnie Leezie, Leezie.

Tam consumed the greater pairt o' his breakfast 'oor admiring his pathetic ootpooring, and then he faulded the paper carefully up, and tied it wi' a bit worsit threed, and direcked it to Miss M'Tansh, o' Broomy Knowes. He slipped it into the post office on his way to his wark, to the accompanying chorus o' "Tam Todd, the poet! Tam Todd, the poet!" yell'd forth by a score o' laddies that follow'd at his heels. Tam didna mind their noise very muckle, hooever; in fact, he was raither pleased than itherwise to think he had becam' sae famous, and when nicht cam' roon, he wander'd awa' to ane o' his auld haunts to recite it ower to every bush or tree that his imagination could conjure into the form o' his bonnie Leezie. Neist day being Sunday, he occupied his usual seat in the parish kirk, and in her usual seat, wi' her een demurely fixed on the minister, as if fearfu' o' losing a single word o' the sermon, sat Leezie M'Tansh, the object o' Tam's affections. Mony a sheep's e'e he cuist at her during the forenoon, and as for hearing what the

minister said, he micht as weel been on the tap o' "Berwick Law." After the kirk skail'd, he linger'd at the yett till Leezie cam' oot, when a look she gied him in passing brocht him to her side wi' the loup o' a lamplichter.

"It's a bonnie day, Tam," said Leezie graciously, as she held oot her han', which he shook heartily, and squeezed affectionately.

"It's a' that atweel, Leezie, though the roads are heavy awee."

"I gat a *Herald* yesterday nicht," said Leezie again, broaching the subject at ance, as she lookit up in Tam's face wi' the tail o' her e'e.

"Did ye na; wha wad it be frae? Your mither, maybe, Leezie."

"Na; it wasna my mither; and brawly ye ken that too," cried Leezie, her broos lowering.

"Hoo should I ken?" rejoins Tam humbly, looking up at a tree.

"Ooi, Tam; ye're unco green wi' your way o't, as gin I didna ken yer han' writing, though it was shaky awee."

"Weel, Leezie, suppose it was me, was there ony harm in't after a'?"

"Oo, na; only ye micht hae said sae at ance, and I've a guid mind ne'er to speak to ye again for yer impidence, but I'll forgie ye for the grand poetry ye wrote, Man, Tam, I didna ken ye were a poet afore, but d'ye expect me to swallow a' yon nonsense," continued Leezie, wi' anither sidelin' glint in his face.

"Every word o't, Leezie! and mair; it doesna hauf tell a' I feel for ye. O, tak' pity on yer puir Tam who lo'es the very soles o' yer bauchels, and wad gang through fire and water to hear ye say that I hae a chance wi' ye."

"Hoots, gae wa', ye muckle sumph, the very kirk folk will be taking notice o' ye," said Leezie, though she could scarcely hide a look o' pleasure that stole into her face.

"Leezie, I dinna care; I'm gaun demented, and I'll aether mak' a spune or spoil a horn; will ye hae me, or will ye no?"

"Wheest, Tam, d'ye no ken it's Sunday; but I'll be doon at the Wall on Tiesday nicht," hastily continued the aggravating jaud as she saw his faple coming doon.

"Will ye, though? Thank ye, Leezie; I'll be there if a's weel, and I houp ye'll hae yer mind made up to lay yer luif in mine for guid an' a', and shair's daith, ye'll ne'er rue it, or my name's no Tam Todd."

"We'll see, we'll see," replied Leezie, "there's mony a slip—ye ken the auld saying—and we mauna be ower shair aboot onything in this warld; but ye've cam' far eneuch. Guid day to ye, and mind Tiesday nicht."

Tam gaed hame wi' a lichter heart than he had dune for mony a day, and when Tiesday cam' roon, he was jist like a fish oot o' the water, he lookit his watch every hauf 'oor, and he thocht they were the langest he had spent in his life A wee after five o'clock, and jist as he was congratulating himsel' that it wad sune be quatting time, his maister cam' into the shop and wagged Tam ower to his bench, wi' a look o' importance in his e'e.

"Tam, here's a job, and it maun be dune the nicht; ye'll dae't in twa 'oors, and of coorse I'll pay ye weel for't.'

"I'm no very weel the nicht, maister," hesitatingly said Tam, his face turning langer by nearly six inches, "and I wad be muckle obleeged to ye if ye'd let it staun till the morn."

"It canna staun, Tam. It's for Girzie Gaff, and ye ken what kind o' woman she is to dale wi'; certie, she'd fire the gairison aboot us gin it's no dune the nicht."

"Curse Girzie Gaff, the bleer'd-e'ed bitch, and a' belangings!" muttered Tam, as a choking sensation cam' into his throat, "I'll no see Leezie the nicht," and he almost grat wi' perfect vexation.

There was nae help for't, hooever, but to begin. He lookit at his watch again, and fand it was jist hauf-past five. He was to see Leezie at seven, and a gleam o' houp shot ower him as he thocht he micht manage to finish the job in time to keep the tryst. Nae suner thocht o' than he aff wi' his waistcoat, row'd up his sark sleeves to his shoother heids, and strapp'd his belt ticht aboot his waist, and till't he gaed like sticks a-brecking. For mair than an 'oor he stuck to his darg like grim death, while the big draps o' sweat trickled doon ower the point o' his nose, and quite regardless o' his maister's dry remarks that he lookit unco no weel like atweel. At twenty minutes to seven the job was completed, and, flinging aff his apron and on his duds, he flew oot o' the door like a daft man, leaving an impression on his maister's mind that he had been taking jalap or some other ill-brew'd stuff. Arrived at his lodgings, he clean'd himsel' like magic, and bang'd oot o' the door again, knocking ower the landlady, wha was coming up the stair wi' the tea things, and smash'd the maist o' the dishes to flinders. Up the hill to Broomy Knowes he gallop'd like ane distracted, reached the wall blawing like a porpoise, lookit at his watch, and fand to his unspeakable mortification that he was fifteen minutes ahint his time. Nae Leezie was there; she had come and gane in the huff, dootless; and as Tam thocht o' her scornfu' anger after a' his exertions, his feelings overpower'd him, and he sat doon on a stane and fairly bubbl'd. He sat nearly an 'oor the very picture o' abject misery. The mirky shadows were fa'ing thickly, and when he started up it was as dark as pick. He lookit ower tae Broomy Knowes and saw a licht in ane o' the winnocks—it was the winnock o' Leezie's sleeping-room—and a desperate idea seized on Tam wi' the quickness o' lichtning. He wad speel up ower the milk-hoose, gently tap on the chess, and let Leezie ken what keepit him. Withoot gien himsel' time to think o' the danger he was incurring, he

aff at ance and cautiously approached the hoose. Wi' nae sma' difficulty he contrived to sclimb up on the tiles o' the milk-hoose, which stood oot like a hauf wing at the gable, and in a few seconds he was below the goal o' his houps. To his great dismay, hooever, he fand he couldna reach the sill by at least six inches, even though standin' on his tiptaes. What was he tae dae? Beat a retreat? Never! The very thocht nearly choked him. He had it! Buttoning his coat, and drawing a long breath, he made a spring for the sill wi' the eagerness o' a famished tiger; but wae's me for human calculation, he missed the mark by a hairbreadth, lost his balance, and cam' doon the tiles like a cairt o' coals couping. By sheer ill-luck he row'd doon in the very direction o' the muckle skylicht, and in till't he fell, dinging in peens and chess wi' the noise o' an earthquake. In his descent his elbow struck a milk basin fu' o' soor dook, sticking out frae ane o' the shelfs, and whomled it clean on his heid like a nicht-cool, drenching him to the skin frae heid to fit, and, to croon a', he lichted on his hurdies in the very middle o' a muckle tub fu' o' mooly cream wi' a sooch like a hauf-hun'er weight bash'd into the mud when the tide was oot. The auld wife, wha was sitting in the kitchen daurning hougers, heard the extraordinary noise, deaf as she was, and in a moment, she yelled oot, "There's murder, fire!" wi' sic vigour that she took a fit wi' the effort, and put the hale hoose in a commotion. Wi' the desperation o' a' perfect madman, Tam lap oot o' the tub, sclamb up the shelfs, and oot o' the winnock, wi' the agility o' a cat wi' a pack o' hounds at her tail. Doon the tiles he hurled, and across the yaird he ran, only to add to his misfortunes by fa'ing a' his length in a saft dung midden. He gasp'd for braith, for his mooth was fu' o' the stinking dirt, and he was jist aboot gien up the ghaist athegither, when the bark o' the big doug put new mettle in his heels ance mair, and gied him life eneuch to creep ower the dyke into the coopark, and frae that to the road. It

wad be needless to describe the horrible plight he was in; hoo his breeks stack to his legs like sookers, hoo his hands were cut and bleeding, hoo the ae side o' his face was a' mooly cream, and the ither a' sharon; and hoo he smelt a' ower like a stinking brock, can be easily imagined, nae doot. Suffice to say that he got hame lang after a' honest folk had closed their doors; let himsel' in wi' his latch-key, clashed a' his claes into a tub fu' o' water; and syne slank to his bed, where he at last fell asleep through doonricht exhaustion.

Neist day he didna rise oot o' his bed ava, which made his maister think he had been raley ill, he sent up the 'prentice to speir hoo he was, a proceeding that only heapit mair coals on Tam's devoted heid. Grief, shame, despair were a' struggling for the maistry in his briest, and he was jist thinking seriously o' deciding the question by stringing himsel' by the neck to the bed-post, when the lassie cam' in and handed him a letter. He open'd it wondering wha it could be frae, and read as follows:—

BROOMY KNOWES, Tusday.

DEER TAM,—i tak this opportun to let you no that i am all well, hopin' you the sam, prase be for it. i am sora that Mrs. Wacwheezle took nowell very fast, and i was obleeg'd for no to cum, as i had to run to her hose, to see you, as the houdie was in the hose, and she was an old naybor o' min, which plese ekscus, and i will see ye, deer Tam, on Friday nite, at ate o'clock, and maybe i'll mak' up for old scors. Ye ken yersel' at the wall.

FROM YEAR DEER LEEZIE.

Here was balm in Gilleid: he was a new man in a minute. He sprang oot o' his bed like a laverock on a May morning; and his spirits, frae being at zero, rose at ance to boiling pitch. He kicked the cat doon the stair, and sat doon and sung, actually sung wi' joy and pleasure.

His troubles were a' forgotten in the happiness o' the moment; and Friday nicht fand him at the wall wi' his arms aboot Leezie's waist, sealing wi' mony a rousing smack, to mak' up for lost time, he said, the compact which Tam, wi' a wee thing o' pressage, gat her to mak', and which was naether mair nor less than to be married. To mak' a lang story short, married they were, at the term, amid flags fleeing and guns firing.

From the *Falkirk Herald*, February 12, 1870.

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

BY WAY O' VARIATION.

HOW TAM TODD BECAME A TEETOTALLER AND A MEMBER O' THE CALEDONIAN PROVIDENT SOCIETY.

(Conclusion.)

Yes! Tam and Leezie were man and wife at last, and fain wad I linger awee ower the marriage joy, and describe the curious ongauns that took place on the waddin' nicht; but I maun hurry on to the thick o' the plot, which dootless ye'll be wearying to be at as weel's mysel'. Merely observing that, after the waddin' knot was tied, and the folk a' waiting for their supper, the baker, in bringing in a muckle beef pie, missed his fitting at the door-step, and fell a' his length on the flair, smashing the dish to atoms, and scattering the boiling gravy into the mouths and een and ower the dresses o' the parties present, and that Tam's nose took to the bleeding wi' the fricht, at the whilk Leezie ram'd a cauld key doon his back to keep him frae fainting, and that the best man, wha had grown obstreepulous ower the toddy, and had been put under lock and key in the hoose o' a neebor present to come to himsel', was found lying half-chockit on the flair wi' the chest o' drawers and the looking-glass on the tap o' him, while his hands, which had been in

deedly conflict wi' the face o' the aucht-day clock, were seriously cut and damaged; I resume the thread o' my story.

For twa years a happier couple didna exist in a' the parish than Tam and Leezie Todd. Their home consisted o' a room and kitchen, and Leezie kept it burnished like a new preen. When Tam cam' hame at nicht frae his wark, tired and hungry, there was the grate shining, a cheery fire blazing, and the kettle singing ane o' its cantiest sangs, while Leezie hersel' looked the very perfection o' comeliness, wi' her rosy cheeks and her sparkling een, and her catch-if-ye-can curls at the side o' her head. Tam at the sicht o' sae muckle comfort forgot his troubles in a moment, and took his supper wi' a relish that only those blessed wi' the same domestic felicity—and they're few and far between—can thoroughly understand. After the supper was by, and the dishes washed and put up in the rack, Tam gied his face a rub, and his hair a claut, and oot the twa sallied for their evening's stroll to the tap o' "Baxter's Brae," whar, sitting doon on a grassy spot, they listened to the mavis chanting his bonnie owercome to his mate in the bush below, and watched the big bleezing sun slipping down inch by inch amid clouds o' burnished goud ahint the western hills. Then when the deepening shadows were gathering thick and fast aroon them, they wad daun'er hame, linked arm in arm, and slip into the hoose again, amid the envious glances o' the clashing neebors. They were a happy couple indeed, for though Tam was a cauf in luve, and Leezie was inclined to hand him lichtly awee on that account afore they were married, she sune fand she had "the wrang soo by the lug" *after* they were married. Tam was maister o' his ain hoose, and Leezie, like a sensible woman, slid in her proper place, and respectit Tam a' the mair for letting her ken what it was. Unfortunately, or fortunately, as folk think—unfortunately, say I—they had nae bairns, nor

were there ony appearance o' ony up to the time referred to. Whether this had onything to dae wi' the rippits that some-hoo ither crap in to disturb the happiness o' their married life, I canna say; but certain it is that there werena sae mony sugary words passed between them noo, whiles trifles—a cat's paw on the water, in fact—which were never before looked at, began to assume a magnitude undreamt o'. Gradually, and little by little, things gaed to the waur. Tam grew surly, Leezie grew snappy, and what aggravated matters was that their acquaintances took a pride in adding to their discontent. Whiles, for instance, on a Saturday nicht, when Leezie was doon in Mr. M'Laver's shop making her purchases for the week, the shopman wad gie her a pickle sweeties to hersel', and shoot loodly afore a' the folk, and "Here's a pickle mair, Mrs. Todd, to the bairns!"—an offer which was shair to set the crood a lauching, and send Leezie hame wi' a burning spat on her face. Tam was tormented in somewhat the same way. If an acquaintance met him, it was, "Hoo are ye, Tam? and hoo's the wife and bairns?" nae matter who was there. Baith Tam and Leezie affected to lauch at this, but I doot it rankled in their minds for a' that, though, mind ye, I dinna say it did; for, as I said before, I canna tell for certain what was the principal cause o' the dispeace that was turning Tam's happiness adrift. By-and-bye, Leezie began to gang mair aboot her neebors' hooses, and tak' mair pleasure in the toon's clashes than she had dune; while Tam, after taking his supper at nicht, wad slip oot again, and awa' wi' some o' his auld cronies to a gouf or quoiting match, and never return till far on in the lang hours; having generally wound up his nicht's diversion wi' a dram or twa doon in Meg Manson's, at the Sign o' the Ship. In the morning there were the usual recriminations which follow behaviour o' this kind, attended by the same result—viz., making the gulf wider wi' every quarrel. For nearly sax months, Tam

and Leezie led a kind o' cat and doug life; gaun frae bad to waur, till they had becam' a speckilation to half the toon. It was nae unusual sicht noo to see Tam gaun hame stotting in braid daylight; while Leezie, wha had also, I'm sorry to say, began to tak' a dram, was seldom in her ain hoose frae morn to nicht. Freends interposed at this stage, and earnestly entreated Tam to join teetotal, as it was the only way o' redeeming his character, and raising him to his auld place in the estimation o' the community. Such advice, however, Tam utterly scouted. "What! become a teetottler? become associated wi' a set like them? a parcel o' bigoted, intolerant, narrow-minded zeelots, wha wad ram their doctrine doon folks' throats whether they liked it or no. Na; I've been a moderate drinker a' my life, and sic I mean to continue. What! me become a drunkard? ME! TAM TODD! Certie ye hae a high opinion o' yer freend, truly. I tell ye what, mind yer ain business, and I'll mind mine; and when I want yer advice I'll send for ye. Oo, I'm no the least angry. I daursay ye mean what's richt, but there's nae fear o' me. Supposing, for argument's sake, that I *was* to join teetotle, I would hae to keep ane. Ance my name was doon to the pledge, it wad never be scored oot, for I'm a man o' my word, sir; I'm nane o' the kind that dirty's the book every ither week; but it canna be—the very thocht o' never tasting again mak's me like to choke wi' drooth. Guid-day to ye, and never fear; ye'll see Tam cock his noddle wi' the best o' them yet." Such was the reasoning that Tam, like mony ither cuifs, put forrit to the kindly advices o' his freends, and, like mony ither cuifs, it ended in his becoming naether mair nor less than a habitual toper. Of course, he neglected his work, and had he no been a first-class han', he wad hae lost it athegither; but his maister was laith to pairt wi' him as lang as houp remained o' his reformation. As it was, a' the pay he earned didna keep him in drink, let alane food, and, to eke oot the wherewithal to satisfy his

craving, he began to plunder the hoose o' odds and en's to obtain what he wanted. Leezie didna seem a grain ahint him, and as a can'le canna last lang burning at baith en's, in a wonderfu' short time they toom'd the hoose frae tap to bottom, aye, even to the key o' the door and the kettle on the fire, which latter Tam lifted ae morning while it was fu' o' boiling water, and hook'd it up the street to the popshop, while every stap he took the steam gaed puff, puff oot o' the stroop, reminding ane of a locomotive in sair distress, or a steam scow on the Forth and Clyde Canal. It was a sorrowfu' condition o' things—sae sorrowfu', indeed, that even Jock Jack, who bore Tam a grudge for putting his e'e out wi' Leezie, couldna help expressing his sympathy for the hapless couple. Still on they gaed in their mad pursuit o' drink. Drink was their breakfast, drink was their dinner, drink was their god. Nae depth o' degradation seem'd ower low for Tam noo, provided he smelt a donald at the bottom o't, and Leezie gaed wi' him han' in han', and focht, absolutely focht, for the drainings o' their last gill.

Ae morning when Tam wauken'd oot o' a feverish sleep, he was lying in his ain bed, at least it was ca'd by that name, though it didna deserve it, unless ane o' the boards in the blackhole o' Bank Street is reckon'd ane, wi' an auld coverlet aboon him, and a raggit toosh for a pillow. The sun was shining in at the winnock, and he heard the birds singing on the trees in the yard ahint the hoose. Sma' charms had they for Tam, however, as his heid was like to split, and as for his drooth a shipwrecked sailor at sea for a month without water was but a flea-bite in comparison. Hoo he had got there he hadna the faintest idea; he had nae recollection o' coming hame, and what put the heidshave on his bewilderment was that he hadna a stitch o' claes on his body, guid nor bad. He was as naked as on the day he was born, and was in admirable condition, as far as appearance

gaed, to tak' command o' the maist savage tribe in the wilds o' Africa. He tried to think, but the racking pain in his heid wadna let him. He tried to speak, and cried, "Leezie! Leezie! are ye there?" twa-three times, but the soond dee'd awa' like an echo in the Union Canal tunnel; and at last he was obleeg'd to lay back his heid and watch the roof spinning roond in grim despair. He lay this way for nearly an hour, and then he lookit atour at the fire, and frae that to the brace, whar he saw his pipe lying black and reekit, while the wee man on the front o' the heid o't seem'd to grin at him, and speer gin he wanted a smoke. "I will," said Tam, in answer to the silent querist, "but hoo to get at *ye* fairly cow's me." He couldna rise in his bare skin condition, and every cloot o' his cleading had mysteriously vanished. He look't aboot himsel' to see if he couldna by ony means "rigg a purchase," and his e'en lichted on Leezie's wrapper, the only ane she had, and raggit eneuch it was, hanging at the back o' the door. A thòcht struck him, and he raxed oot his han' and seized the garment, and on wi't in a minute, wi' the hooks and e'en to the back. A minute mair saw him sitting at the fire wi' his ae leg ower the ither, blawing a glorious clood and quite forgetfu' o' the disabeel state he was in. He was watching the smoke swurling up to the roof, and trying the impossible feat o' spitting occasionally, when the door open'd, and Miss M'Cluskie, the distributor o' the "Monthly Visitor," cam' in wi' a smile on her face and a tract in her han'. "Guid morning to ye, Mrs Todd," she was proceeding to say, when Tam, wi' a smothered yell, made a spoot to get in below the bed. Miss M'Cluskie lookit at the apparition in wonderment, but in a moment mair she blushed up to the roots o' her hair, uttered a skirl, banged oot o' the door, and doon the street. She galloped as gin the muckle deil himsel' was at her heels. Tam, wi' his usual luck, had got his heid and shoothers jam'd between the bed and a borrowed washing-tub, the

remainder of his corpus sticking out to view, presenting a picture that required stronger nerves than Miss M'Cluskie to contemplate with equanimity. At the same time, Leezie, who had been washing Tam's claes in the washing-house at the back, cam' in for coals, and was maistly paralysed at the extraordinary phenomenon. It was only for a moment, for ere ye could say "Knife," doon cam' the shule she had in her han' wi' a skelp that might hae been heard a mile awa'. "Oh!" groaned Tam. "Ye disgracefu' scoon'rel," said Leezie (skelp); "ye ne'er-dae-weel (skelp); ye scoor-the-kintry blackguard, to affront a leddy" (skelp, skelp, skelp).

"Murder!" roared Tam at last. "D'ye mean to kill me ootricht, ye harden'd limmer?"

"Deil mak' maeter though ye were deid and me too," said Leezie, peching, as she drew him by the leg oot below the bed, and bundled him anower on the tap o' the claes. "Ye wad disgrace me, ye miserable object that ye are!" "It was yer ain faut; ye shouldna hae ta'en awa' my claes," answered Tam, sulkily.

"Ta'en awa' yer claes. D'ye ken what like they were? They were covered wi' soot frae heid to fit wi' scliming up Meg Manson's chimley, an' a' for the wager o' a gill. O ye drucken bruit that ye are! but I'll pit up wi't nae langer. I'm sick o' this kind o' life," cried Leezie, in a fit o' remorse; "and I'll leave ye this very day, and gang hame to my mither, so I will."

"Wheest, Leezie, ye mauna say that, and I'll pit in the pin frae this henceforth. (He had said the same a score o' times). I'm determined on't. We've baith been wrang, and gane aff the straucht a wee, but it'll be sae nae langer. Gie's yer hand, and let byganes be byganes, and we'll baith turn ower a new leaf thegither."

What could Leezie dae but agree, which she did after taking a guid greet to hersel'. She had never athegither been lost to shame, and the proposition to turn ower a new leaf, as Tam ca'd it, was gladly viewed as an indication o' a return to their former happiness.

Tam gaed oot to his wark neist day, and though the story o' his queer predicament, some hoo or ither, had got wind, and mony a slee lauch was had at his expense ahint his back, naebody let on they kent onything aboot it to his face, sae they let him alane, and in a month or twa it was nearly forgotten. A' this time Tam stuck to his wark like a "troodgen," and his hoose frae haeing the appearance o' a complete wreck, began to look cosy again. The bloom return'd to Leezie's cheeks, and the auld happy blink was stealing to her e'e, when, unfortunately, Tam was laid on the braid o' his back wi' typhus fever, and for upwards of three weeks it was heids or tails whether he wad dee or leeve. Heids wad hae won, nae doot, had it no been for his wife's carefu' nursing and never-wearying attention. Nicht and day she hovered aboot his bedside, and proved that she was a true woman after a', ane o' the noble kind whose mission is to smooth and refine the jaggit edges o' roucher mortals, and bring them into harmony wi' a' that is guid and bonnie in this world o' oors. It was lang ere Tam got his heid fairly aboon water, and when he did his heart was like to sink wi' despondency when he thocht o' the load o' debt he had contracted during his illness. It hung like a millstane round his neck, but there was nae help for it but to try and get rid o't as sune as he could.

He was sitting at the fire ae nicht after his wark was ower, looking at Leezie washing up the dishes, when the door opened, and Geordie Boles, ane o' his auld freens, stappit in.

"Come anower, Geordie (bring a chair, Leezie), od, but I'm blithe to see ye, man," said Tam, extending his hand.

"Nae mair blithe than I'm to see you, Tam," replied Geordie, shaking hands. "Hech! but ye've gotten a shake, an' nae mistak'; are ye fairly better noo, think ye?"

"Ooi, thank ye; I daurna compleen as far as health's concerned; but Geordie, man, we hae gaen tae the wa' raither seriously, and I canna help fretting at the thocht

o' what a time it'll tak' to get my name scored oot o' Mr. M'Claver's books."

"Hoots, man, ye mauna let that pit doon yer pluck. Wi' health and steadiness ye'll sune win ower't; but, Tam," continued Geordie, "I wad tak care, gin I were you, that the same state o' maeters widna occur again. I wad tak' steps to prevent that onyway."

"Hoo, Geordie?"

"Join the Caledonian Provident Society."

"And what guid wad that dae me?"

"Weel, ye wad get 12s. a week when laid up sick, a doctor to attend ye a' the year round, 5s. a week for life when unable to work, and £8 to bury yersel', at least Leezie wad get it after ye had slippit awa', and a' for thirteenpence a week."

"My certie, that's no bad ava, and I wadna care to enrol mysel' at ance. What say ye, guidwife?"

"Join, of coorse, Tam," said Leezie, eagerly; "no' that I care aboot the £8," she hastily rejoined, as Geordie and Tam commenced the lauching, but the 12s. will be a guid stand by for a rainy day, and guidness kens we've haen plenty o' them this while back."

"On wi' yer coat, then, Tam," cried Geordie, rising, "and we'll awa' doon to Wull Spiers, the secretary, and get yer name on the list. Ye'll hae to pass the doctor, ye ken, but that pairt o' the programme 'll be a' richt nae doot."

Tam on wi' his coat as direckit, and awa' the twa gaed doon the toon. They were fortunate in getting Wull in, and Geordie sune explained the nature o' their errand.

"I'm glad to hear that ye intend to become ane o' us, Tam; it's a step ye'll ne'er regret," said Wull, as he carefully open'd a muckle book, and smooth'd doon a leaf to his satisfaction. "Here, laddie, rin oot and buy a bawbee pen. Stop," he continued, "a pencil will dae as weel; just write yer name doon on this line, Tam; it's only a form we gae through, ye ken."

Tam wrote his name as direckit, remarking that the paper was awfu' thin, at which baith Wull and Geordie gaed ane anither a wink, and had a bit sly lauch to themsel's ahint Tam's back.

The ither staps necessary to Tam's admission to the society were easily accomplished, and twa-three days afterwards he received a letter, and a muckle ane it was, while sitting at his breakfast. He open'd it cautiously, and fand twa enclosures. The ane was a note, informing him that he had been duly admitted a member o' the Caledonian, and the ither was a *Teetotal Card*, in which Tam pledged himsel' never again to touch, taste, nor han'le the barley bree, nor encourage't in ony shape or form.

"Weel, this is too bad," said Tam, angrily. "I wonder wha could hae the presumption to forge my name to sic a document; hae ye ony idea, Leezie?" he continued, as he handed it ower to his guidwife.

"It's yer ain writing, Tam."

"It's not."

"But it is."

"But I tell ye it's no."

"But I tell ye it is; d'ye think I dinna ken yer characters? There's no ane in a toon could mak' them like ye."

"Ance for a' I tell ye, Leezie, that ye're wrang," said Tam, stamping his fit and making a' the dishes dance a jig on the table.

"But I dinna care though ye wad preach till the morn, the writing's yours," cried Leezie, birsing up wi' a lowing face.

"The woman's gaen gyte; see haud o' the confounded thing, and I'll throw it into the fire, and that will end a' disputes on the matter.

At this juncture in cam' Geordie Boles, and Leezie handed the card to that individual, wi' the exclamation—"Is that no oor Tam's writing, Geordie?"

"It's a' that, Mrs. Todd, for I saw him dae it mysel' wi' my ain een."

"Then I'm daft, and fit for Morningside whenever ye like," roared Tam. "I havena the sma'est recollection o' ever taking the pledge in my life; and I'll be licket if I can understand it ava."

"Licket or no licket, that's yer ain mark onyway, and Wull Speirs saw ye dae it as weel as me."

Tam sat doon helplessly in the muckle chair, and glower'd in the fire. He claw'd his heid, and tried to think ower a' his proceedings for three months back, but in a' memory's am'ry he couldna find the signing o' the pledge.

Meanwhile Leezie had slippit ben the hoose, and deposited the card safely into ane o' her drawers, locked it, put the key in her pouch, and syne returned to the kitchen ere Tam had got through wi' his ruminating.

"Weel," said Tam at last, starting to his feet, "I canna fathom the mystery ava; but sin' ye saw me signing it, Geordie, I suppose I must hae dune sae; and after thinking ower't it's maybe jist as weel. I micht as weel be a teetottler oot and oot as ane in principle. Gie's yer hand, Geordie, I'll keep it, never fear."

"I'm prood to hear ye say it, Tam; ye'll never rue what ye've dune, I'll tak' my aith. Guid morning, and whenever ye want a freen', send for Geordie Boles."

A' noo was plain sailing wi' Tam and Leezie—(she had slippit doon to Wull Speirs and got a card o' her ain.) The days gaed by like clock-wark; gradually the hoose began to resume its auld appearance, and little by little the millstane wore awa', tlll it disappeared athegither. Tam entered heartily into the temperance schemes, and rose frae post to pillar till he became "the president" o' the society; while Leezie was wi' him heart and han' in whatever he did. It was mair than twelve months after his signing the pledge that he was informed o' hoo he had been dune. It was a very simple matter after a'. Geordie Boles and

Wull Speirs contrived the plot, under the pretence o' entering his name in the Caledonian list. Wull got haud o' a book for copying letters into, slipped the card between the leaves wi' a bit black paper (the kind the haberdashers use in writing duplicate accounts) on the tap o't, smooth'd doon the leaf, and when Tam wrote his name in the book, there it was on the card perfectly clear and legible. It was the easiest matter in the warld for Wull to cover the pencil strokes wi' ink, and the job was completed. Tam lauched heartily when he heard the trick explained, and confess'd it was the best turn that ever he had got dune to him in his life. As for Leezie, a tear o' joy cam' trickling doon her cheek, as she prayed in her heart that baith Geordie Boles and Wull Speirs micht be blessed for their kindly action. Naething noo mars the domestic felicity o' Tam and Leezie Todd, except that Leezie is occasionally fash'd wi' toothache. Tam hasna muckle sympathy for her, hooever; in fact, he raither seems to enjoy her torment, and says to ony remark on the subject, "Oo, it'll sune leave her, nae doot." I canna understan' it ava, and anither thing I canna fathom is, that when ony o' the neebors ca's in, Leezie's aye trying to hide something no unlike the croon o' a wee mutch. Strange isn't? but bide awee, bide awee; time'll tell.

(From the *Falkirk Herald*, March 19, 1870.)

THE COCK O' THE STEEPLE TO THE "BAIRNS" O' FA'KIRK.

Odds and En's.

Curling—An Adventurous Voyage—Ploughing Matches, etc.

An auld freen o' mine in Grangemouth ance had a famous starling that could yatter and crack as guid as ony parrot in the kintry. He had ta'en great pains wi' its edication, and the result was that it could tell the guidwife to "mak' a cup o' tea," speer "what o'clock is it?" "does yer mither know you're out?" &c., in the usual guttural utterances peculiar to sic beasties. The cage in which it capered hung on the wa' opposite the street door, and when ony freen or acquaintance cam' in the bird wad watch every movement o' the intruder first wi' the ae e'e, and syne wi' the ither, and listen as attentively to the crack as gin it kent every word that was said. Among the daily visitors to Willie's domicile was a neebor gossip o' the female sex, whose usual salutation on entering was, "Hech, bodies, hoo are ye a' the day?" This she had repeated times without number in the coorse o' her visitations, till without ony ane kenning o't, the starling pick'd it up, and pooched it as a sort o' reserve, dootless, to its slender stock o' information. Ae day the gossip referred to cam' in at twal hoors to speer for the guidwife, but, won'erfu' to say, the usual salutation wasna forthcoming. The starling couldna understan' it ava. It

sat as quiet as a moose wi' its clear glittering een fixed on the incomer for a minute or twa, syne it gied an indignant chuck, chuck, and lap to the ither spar, and listened again. Then it happed back, and sat wi' great patience till the wifie was taking her leave, when it screamed oot its secret, "Hech, bodies, hoo are ye a' the day?"

Wi' a slight alteration, I echo the words o' the starling, and exclaim—"Hech, 'bairns,' hoo are ye a' the day?"

Sin' I last had the pleasure o' addressing you, I've haen mony a cauld whirl, and mony a bitter blast to face; for, as ye ken, nae matter hoo bitter the skyte, I maun hae my face till't. Were my neb made o' ordinary stuff, and had a drap till't, as many o' the "bairns" had to theirs in the cauld wather, it micht hae gat frozen up athegether, and brocht my crawing to an untimely en'; but, guid be thankit, I'm nane o' yer common gentry. Though the rain, and the win', and the snaw, and the hail batter aff me every ither day, a blink o' sunshine mak's me as cheery and as fit to craw as ever. Besides, amid a' the wild nor'-easters that blew, there was aye something o' a heart-heezing character gaun on amang the "bairns," and in the contemplation o't, I forgat a' aboot the wather, tho' it was cauld as Greenland. There, for instance, was the curling bonspiels, which I view'd with great delicht, mair especially as the "bairns" aye cam' aff victorious; and it's nae sma' credit to them that such should be the case, considering the metal that was opposed to them. Shairly the Provost, and those who are alang wi' him, will noo push earnestly forward the scheme o' the new curling pond to a successful termination ere anither winter caps the Ochils wi' a snawy bannet. Get a pond whar ye could hae a day's curling wi' a nicht's frost. King Frost's a fickle character noo-a-days and he doesna aften bestow his favours on his votaries; but sma' as they are, they are worth the watching, for let me see the man, ance he has "redd the ice," that wadna travel

fifty miles to enjoy the glorious game, and I'll show you a phenomenon that never was dreamt o' in a' the warld's history. Curling is truly a noble recreation, and ane that ought to be encouraged whenever opportunity occurs. Unfortunately, the opportunity doesna occur sae aften as ane wad like; but as maitters stan', it has aften to be let slip for want o' the means to meet it, as it were, hauf-way. The project referred to wad accomplish this in a great measure, and I houp, wi' a' my heart, that the Provost, wha, without flattery, is a keen and guid curler, will no let it dee oot, but will rather jog it alang, till the wishes of his subjects in this respect are fairly consummated.

While crawing blithely ower the victories o' the "bairns" during the past winter, I canna help gieing an extra "cockle-leerie" for the curlers o' the Port. The Juniors won their first medal this winter on Callendar Loch, and every ane o' them were as prood as peacocks on a sunny day. Certie they had some reason to be prood too, for it's no every club in the province that could send the curlers o' Muiravonside hame wi' their fingers in their mouths. I think I see them yet as—

> To sharp inwick wi' bitter skyte,
> And many a pat-lid braw,
> They chappit oot afore the gairds,
> And yerkit to the snaw:
> Till water kelpies 'neath the ice
> In wonder heard the rattle,
> And shook wi' dread, beneath the tread,
> O' curling kings in battle.

There was Sandie Laidlaw, looking as grave and earnest as gin the fate o' nations depended on his single arm, while a wee bit farther ower the ice Stevedore Tam, wi' a face bleezing like a nor'-wast mune, was roaring like wud, as the stane he had just thrown cam' birring up the "howe." "Dinna meddle her! dinna meddle her! soop

noo! soop! Guidsake, what are ye glowring at? Can ye no soop? She his't, ha! ha! On she gaes—crack, bang, crack—yin, twa, three, for Grangemouth;" and Tam and his associates performed an impromptu bull reel roun' the rings, wi' their brooms whirling aloft in uproarious rejoicing. When the game terminated in their favour, the rejoicings were renewed after the approved manner of the Port, and a' the road hame the spiel was played ower and ower again fifty times at the very least. Before they pairted the maist o' their ideas had gat sae muddled wi' pat-lids, weekes, hougs, cowes, and curling stanes, that it wad hae puzzled a Greek philosopher, supposing he had studied the phraseology o' the roaring game, as to what they were cracking aboot. Joking aside, however, the Juniors won their first Caledonian richt gallantly; and as they hae noo broken the spell, the club that lowers their colours for the neist ane will hae to pit its best fit foremost.

Whenever I begin to crack o' the Port and onything connected wi't, I could haver awa' frae June to Janewar. I ken a' the bodies sae weel, and I admire their ways sae muckle that it's doonricht pleasure to look back through memory's spy-glass and pick oot the green spots that dotted auld Sealock in life's faucht. Mony's the queer sicht I hae seen ower the taps o' the guid auld Earl's trees frae my eerie up here, and mony a queer story I've heard—for mind ye I've lugs as weel as een—frae the gallant auld tars wha, after shivering their timbers ower hauf the warld, had cam' to anchor at last in the vicinity o' Mitchell Laird's shop, by the side o' Carron Water. Mony o' the tars referred to hae, alas! foundered and sunk for ever oot o' sicht, but it will be a lang time ere their kindly wather-beaten faces and curious yarns fade oot o' remembrance. I dinna mean to relate a' their yarns at present; indeed, though I was ever so much inclined, it wad be impossible; as those of "Lord Pickaxe," wi' his adventures amang the Mouries

(Maories), wad fill a volume themselves. Maybe I'll gi'e ye some o' them at a future time. Meanwhile, as I'm in the way o' odds an' en's, I'll tell ye ane that will show how fearlessly the tars of a bygane age could face

"The stormy winds that blow."

People noo-a-days aften express their admiration when they hear o' some mushroom yacht that has crossed the Atlantic, forgetting for the maist pairt that the navigators on board hae tempted Providence purely for the sake of popularity and a name. Should they succeed in reaching their destination, they obtain what they bargained for in plenty, but should the muckle waves gobble them up, there's a good deal o' serve-them-richt thochts underlying whatever sympathy may be expressed. Wi' the regular sea-going mariner the case is different. He is often, by the force o' circumstances, obleeged to ship in crafts anything but seaworthy. He has nae popularity to win, but he has breed to earn for the young mooths at hame, and he has produce to bring for the kintry at lairge. Gang he must, and nae ferlie in what kin' o' craft he ships, except it be by freens nearly interested, its only looked upon as a maitter o' coorse In this way many an adventurous voyage has been made and gane by unrecorded, and yet had the details been placed alangside those of modern experience, belauded as they are, little wad be lost wi' the comparison. Many years ago, ane o' the most eminent firms o' timber merchants in Glesca, in commencing business, purchased a lichter named the Princess Royal. She was about 60 tons register, and for 40 years, perhaps, had done duty on the Forth and Clyde Canal. Ane can easily imagine the state she was in after the buffetings she had received amang the locks a' these years, but the firm were anxious to import their ain timber, sae they turned her into dock, caulked her auld sides, and rigged her oot like a sloop, and syne laid her

on for *guids and passengers* at Port Dundas for Pictou, in Nova Scotia. Captain ———, o' Airth, was appointed to the command, and Sandie Deas, o' Grangemouth, being enlisted as chief-officer, and four seamen afore the mast, completed the complement o' hands. Having shipped her cargo and one passenger (a schulemaister), aff she started doon the Bowling Canal, ahint three o' the Bummer's best horses, amid the cheers o' the onlookers. Passing oot into the Clyde, a scowman coming up frae Greenock wi' his vessel, speir'd whar they were bound to, and on being answered "Pictou," the man evidently thocht they were making a fule o' him, for on being asked whar *he* was bound to, he yelled oot "Gibraltar, and be hanged to ye, and aiblins I'll be there as sune as ye'll be at Pictou." Arrived at the Tail o' the Bank they cast anchor, and the maister went ashore for the purpose o' shipping anither han'; he picked ane up at the Custom House, a tall, dandy looking character, wha wanted to "call a keb" to tak' doon his kist. The maister, hooever, said there was nae use gaun to ony expense, as he would carry the kist himsel'—an offer that knocked the conceit clean oot' o' the dandy sailor, and made him glad to lug his kit to the quay on Shank's naigie. Neist morning they set sail, and in a few days they were dancing amang the waves o' the Western Ocean. It wad be needless to enter into details o' their weary voyage; suffice to say they arrived safely at their destination, took in their cargo, and prepared to return. They found, hooever, that the vessel, never very strong, was likely to gi'e way athegither—was, in fact, likely to burst open—and discharge the cargo, without nether-winch or crowbar. Here was a dilemma, but the crew were equal to the occasion: they girt her roon' wi' airn chains like a raft o' timber, and aff they set for hame. In five weeks after they moored her in the canal basin, opposite the Zetland Hotel, amid the congratulations o' Sandie's auld cronies, wha, ere he left, assembled in Bummer Morrison's, and solemnly drank his

dredgy, as they never expected to see him back. Thus terminated the first and last voyage o' the "Princess Royal" across the Atlantic, and by its success laid the foundation of the extensive timber trade of Messrs Baird & Brown, of Glesca. Little was known ootside o' the Port o' the adventure—for it was naething less—and it sune drapt oot o' memory athegither. It is worthy o' a place even at this late hoor, hooever, in the columns o' the *Herald*, and I'm shair the Aeditor will no grudge the space to dae justice to the gallant-hearted sailors o' the Port wha took pairt in it. As far as I ken, they're a' lying quate and cauld noo, wi' the gowans waving ower their heids, and the laverocks singing in the lift aboon their narrow beds. The end o' the maister and mate was remarkably alike. The captain was fand deid in his bunk on board the "Princess," wi' his open Bible lying beside him; and auld Sandie, after attending a prayer meeting ae nicht in the Port, gaed hame in his usual health, and dee'd neist morning at four o'clock.

"His weary heid was laid at rest
His pilgrimage was dune."

Honest, auld Sandie Deas, never a man or woman in a' the Port will grudge yer memory a kindly word! Gentle in spirit, and simple-minded as a bairn, ye sailed the still waters o' yer later years till the great Commander brocht ye into the peacefu' haven o' the gouden city, whar nae win's rave nor storms assail!

The thow had scarcely frichted John Frost awa', and a' his curling lieges wi' him, when a new pleasure unfaulded itsel', and killed the megrims that threatened to tak' haud o' me. Aroon' on every side, east, wast, north, and sooth, the farmer bodies wauken'd into life, and in every ither field were trying their skill against ilk ither in turning over lea and stubble. It was a gran' sight to see a score o' ploo's starting in the match o' the Eastern

District, the lads ahint them deck'd oot wi' their Feein' Fairsday waistcoats, and looking as gin they were determined to uphaud the honour o' their respective toons; and the horses afore them prancin' grandly, wi' their polished graith and ribbon-decorated manes. There was nane o' yer cairter "yine yite's" to be heard here. The lads simply said "Bess" this, or "Rab" that, and at the signal the intelligent animals started as gently gin they kent the prize depended on their steadiness. Up the riggs they travel, mony an anxious e'e watching keenly the progress they are making. "Steady, Tam, steady; I wonder what mak's that aff mere o' his sae fractious," mutters an onlooker to himself, as he watches his freen' up the field.

"Od, Jock's making bonnie wark," mutters anither onlooker; "end as ye've begun, and the medal's yours." Hauf way up the ploos begin to tail aff, and ere an hoor gaes by they're scattered aboot in a' directions; some are coming doon while ithers are gaun up, and the e'e begins to find it difficult to distinguish the ane it looks for in the ever-varying scene. By-and-bye ane o' the ploo's finishes up, syne anither, and anither, till the match cam' to a conclusion, and then the judges stap in to decide the fate o' the competitors. Carefully they scan a' the different points, mark the uncovered tufts, the broken heidlan', and the cleanest furr, and then, after an earnest consultation, they proclaim Jamie Ronald, o' Cauldhame, the champion o' the Eastern District o' Stirlingshire. Weel dune, Jamie; richt nobly ye hae earned the title; for there hasna been a match in which ye took pairt for years back but ye've been there or there-aboot, and ye maun hae as mony medals and prizes kicking aboot Cauldhame noo as an Indian has scalps in his wig'am. Ye're a credit to yer toon, and gin Maister Burns, the schulemaister, had been leeving, he wad hae been prood o' his auld scholar. May ye win mony a prize yet, ere the winter o' age unsteadies yer han', or disturbs the ettle o' yer e'e.

I was speaking o' Maister Burns, the schulemaister, and I was hauf intending to reca' some pleasing reminiscences o' his schule doon in Stark's park, but I'm ower late o' beginning this week, and I'll therefore defer them till my next communication.

Readers will naturally suppose from the above concluding sentence that Buchanan contributed prose writings to the columns of the *Falkirk Herald* later than March, 1870; but a careful search of the files of that newspaper does not confirm the supposition, nothing further having appeared in reference to the subject.—EDITOR.

THE END.

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